THE ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

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Some of the Contents

COMMENTARY
Douglas Jerrold

SINK ME THE SHIP, MASTER GUNNER
O. E. Crosthwaite Eyre, M.P.

THE FAILURE OF ERNEST BEVIN
Anthony Nutting, M.P.

THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA
The Marquis del Moral

HOW WE GOT THE PRESENT-DAY FOXHOUND
Major Guy Paget

FOUNDATIONS OF ISRAEL
Christopher Sykes

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THE ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

Edited by DOUGLAS JERROLD

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THE

ENGLISH REVIEW MAGAZINE

DECEMBER COMMENTARY

AS Colonel Crosthwaite Eyre points out in his article in this number of *The English Review Magazine*, the devaluation of sterling is not an act of policy by H.M. Government but merely the inevitable consequence of the flight from sterling. This, in its turn, is the necessary consequence of four years of Socialist finance. It is the world's unprejudiced and inescapable judgment of the state to which our economy has been reduced. Unfortunately, it is not necessarily the world's last word on the subject. Already the so-called free rate in New York is below the new official rate, and although the free rate is by no means an absolutely reliable guide—the real value of sterling can only be ascertained if and when the £ is allowed to go free and find its own value—it is at least an indication that there is no confidence in New York in the stability of the new rate of exchange.

It is against this sombre background that the electorate will soon have to undertake its periodical stocktaking and decide whether its affairs can safely be left for a further period to the hands of our present managers. It is not the least of the charges which can legitimately be brought against them that the electorate will most certainly continue to be sheltered from the effects of the financial and economic crisis until after the election has taken place. The Government pretend that devaluation will create an immensely increased demand for British goods and services in the hard currency countries and in this way contribute to closing the so-called dollar gap. This is moonshine. What devaluation will do is to enable us to increase the volume of our exports and just possibly to do so sufficiently to maintain their pre-devaluation dollar value. Our dollar imports will, however, cost us more, and these will still have to be drastically reduced unless there is such a marked return of world confidence in our economy as would lead to a flow of dollars for capital investment in the sterling area.

UNFORTUNATELY, everything the Government has done since devaluation has further diminished such little confidence as the United States still retained in our readiness and ability to avert the clearly threatened transition from crisis to collapse. Further, as Mr. Anthony Nutting points out in the article which follows this commentary, just when Sir Stafford Cripps's policy is undermining our credit in North America, Mr. Ernest Bevin's policy is undermining it in Europe as it has already done so, and quite disastrously, in the Near East. The two keys to our own recovery, as to that of the whole western world, are the restoration of British credit and western European solidarity expressed in terms of political co-operation, economic union and effective military preparations for defence To none of these major

objectives does the policy of H.M. Government contribute in the least. The major consideration affecting Mr. Attlee and his colleagues is to delude the electorate into thinking that all, if not well, is tolerably well, and to assure the voters that even if a few rich people have to suffer a little more, their own jobs, working conditions and rates of pay are relatively secure. Even if wages cannot be immediately increased, they can certainly be stabilized and the cost of living increase reduced to very nominal proportions.

NOT one of their assurances is justified. This does not mean, however, that the electorate is at all certain to wake up to the real facts in time to affect their verdict at the general election. The greatest of all the evils of Socialism is the immense power it gives to Governments to mislead the voters, and, indeed, it is charitable and perhaps just to add, to mislead themselves. In a short time, and in the short run, almost all things are possible to a modern Government armed with unlimited powers over men, money and markets. Rations can be increased, Stock Exchange values boosted and unemployment concealed. An artificially stimulated home demand can even provide the appearance of boom conditions, when real bankruptcy is only just round the corner. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is the psychological climate engendered by years of Socialist teaching. No lesson from the past has any meaning because unemployment and all its accompanying misery was a capitalist weapon against the working class, not a necessary consequence of living beyond our means, of producing too little and consuming too much. Socialism, on the contrary, can avoid the consequences of what are not economic laws but only political devices employed in the course of the class war. And, if difficulties arise, the remedy is not less Socialism but more.

THE "kindly" brand of socialist, informed, as they tell us, with Christian charity, are good enough to admit that the Conservative Party has no wish to see the return of unemployment and will honestly strive to avoid it, but, they add, under the capitalist system it is unavoidable. Only the Socialist state can avoid it. And if they are asked how they propose to avoid it, they tell us that by our own admission we are in the midst of an economic crisis and that they have in fact succeeded, despite this, in maintaining full employment. It is a lie, because it was not Mr. Attlee but Mr. Marshall who achieved this result, and he has achieved it by giving us the food and raw materials which, under the new Socialist dispensations we can no longer afford to buy. As, however, the Socialist party has so well learnt from Dr. Goebels, the bigger the lie the better the chance of getting away with it; the Conservative party's chances in the next election depend on killing this particularly big lie in time.

OUR whole future depends on our doing so, because in the nature of the case the lie gets more monstrous with every month that passes. We could not afford to feed our population, even on the barest rations, with the dollar four to the £ sterling. To-day, our deficit is greatly increased, and, as time goes on, it will increase further. The British workman has to produce enough not only for his own consumption but for the consumption, on the same level as himself, of the whole vast army of non-producers of consumable goods. If the total of our consumption continues to exceed the total of our production, and it does very greatly exceed it to-day, the value of the £ must continue to fall and the value of the free gifts we require to keep our economy alive will continuously rise.

IT is fair to say that the first reaction of the United States to devaluation was favourable. It was taken as a sign that the Government had at last seen the red light and was preparing to put its house in order. The reaction from the reaction has since been very severe. The belief is now widespread that the

present Government have no serious intentions of modifying their policy in any important respect and British business is coming in for a fair share of blame. The American buyer expects the full benefit of the devaluation in the prices quoted; he also expects to be able to take advantage of the cheaper prices by getting immediately what he requires. He does not understand the mentality of a country which cries to high heaven about the shortage of dollars but which is yet unable to supply him with the goods he requires in any reasonable time. The fact that British factories are full up with orders for the sterling area markets is realized, but the American buyer also understands, what many of us, outside of politics, forget, that this brisk demand for the home and continental market is only made possible by Marshall aid. The American buyer does not feel he ought to be penalized because of his country's generosity. For the rest he hears only of delays due to lack of plant or buildings, which explain but do not, in his view, excuse the failure to meet his requirements.

A LOT of this criticism is, of course, unreasonable, nor does it apply universally. The United States business man is, however, sufficiently harassed by his own Government and has no mind to be harassed by ours. This is a consideration to be borne in mind. He is also discouraged by our very modified confidence in our own future. Always seeking personal reassurance—and, judging by the astronomical sales of books which tell you how to achieve maturity, peace of mind and the esteem of your fellow men, the need to be reassured is felt from coast to coast—the representative American citizen has, nevertheless, an unbounded confidence in the future of the United States. That is the fixed belief to which he clings, and he finds it almost impossible to accept as credit-worthy a foreigner whose confidence in the future of his own country is hedged round with provisos. It follows that the unfortunate Englishman trying to do long-term business with the United States, tends to be equally suspect if he approves or if he deplores the way in which we are governed. In general, there is abundant goodwill and a very real determination to help generously, but there is an equally real anxiety about our will to recovery which must be allayed if it is not to become yet another trade barrier between the two countries.

OUR learned, but sometimes irritating, contemporary, *The Economist*, professes great sympathy for the truly intelligent elector at the forthcoming election. There are, it appears, very few such, for all who support any of the three chief political parties are counted out, but such as there are face, we are told, a really insoluble problem when they try to determine how to cast their vote. It is not a case, according to *The Economist*, of deciding which Party, if returned to power, would give us the best, but which would give us the least hopelessly bad government. This appears to us to be nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that. If, like Mr. Attlee, I believed still in the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange, I should of course vote for the Socialists. *The Economist* does not believe in this policy, and one can only conclude either that *The Economist* thinks the Socialist party are no longer Socialist or that the Conservative party are converts to Socialism, or that the question whether or no we nationalize our economy is an unimportant issue.

EACH of these conclusions is equally absurd, but it is the last of them which is also dangerous. It may be that the Socialist party, who are far cleverer at election tactics than we are, will succeed in preventing their opponents from making nationalization the supreme issue at the next election, but it is the first task of the Conservative party to secure that the fight is fought on that issue and no other. If the Socialists are returned they will proceed to nationalize several basic industries. They will also proceed to prepare

plans for the future nationaliztion of the land, the heavy industries and merchant shipping. They will forever close the door, whether they intend it or not, to dollar investments alike at home and in the Colonial possessions. They will also break the back of the private enterprise system even in those industries which are not included in their ten-year programme. Once a really substantial section of our economy is nationalized, private enterprise, even outside the nationalized field, becomes impossible. You cannot have political wages and a non-competitive economy operating in one small country side by side with the private enterprise system. Apart from the fact that the losses in the nationalized industries will have to be subsidized by an ever-decreasing number of private undertakings, those undertakings themselves will find their profits vanishing. The buoyancy of the home market depends largely on competition. New gadgets, new amenities, new raw materials, new men and new methods, the demand for all these depends directly on a predominantly free, and therefore competitive, economy. Even social life becomes unutterably drab in a non-competitive world, and the demand for consumer goods is correspondingly reduced.

THESE things, however, are trifles compared to the effect of further great increases of nationalization on our overseas trade and our position as a world power. If, by progressive extensions of nationalization, we shut the door to dollar investment in all our most productive industries, and by the socialization of our Colonial resources, which will certainly follow, we shut the doors of our Colonial Empire in President Truman's face, and if at the same time we freeze and paralyse our chief productive industries into a rigid system of state-owned monopolies, we shall lose our last chance of closing the dollar gap. We shall be driven, as it is the intention of the Socialists that we shall be driven, back into the world of exclusive bilateral and barter agreements. We shall have to turn our backs equally crudely and brusquely on Western Union and on Atlantic Union. We shall destroy simultaneously both of the two chief hopes of mankind.

THESE are not just consequences which, if everything went unexpectedly wrong with nationalization, might possibly follow. They are, assuming that the country gives the present Government a clear mandate for a further five years of Socialism, the only possible consequences. Refreshed with a vote of confidence from the electorate, Mr. Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps are not going to abandon nationalization; they are going to extend it. They are not going to give up the control of investment; they are going to intensify it. They are not going, with a whole galaxy of new industries to nationalize, to abandon the control and route-ing of raw materials; they are going to make the control more rigid and they are going to give the nationalized industries priority over the free-economy industries. As for British credit, the Socialists have already deprived the old shareholders in the already nationalized industries of twenty per cent of their compensation in the first two years of nationalization, with the threat of losing a further unspecified percentage the moment the Government broker withdraws his support from the market in gilt-edge securities. If this is really what the public like, and what they wish to see happen to anyone stupid enough to invest in a British Government security, then it will go on happening, and British credit will fall to lower and lower levels. It cannot possibly do otherwise, nor will the fall be checked by reflecting on the type of man whom the Socialists, desiring to honour, place on the boards of nationalized undertakings.

LAST but not least, there is the terrible political penalty which must be paid by any democracy which allows its key industries, its banking and its credit-control organizations to fall into the hands of the central Government and thus forfeits its economic

independence. The story of the advance of democracy is, throughout all history and in all countries, the same. It is the story of how the power of the purse was taken from the Government and firmly lodged in the hands of the governed. Once that was done, but never until it was done, could the governed control the government. Once the Government get control of our industries, our power system and our transport, the Government have regained the power of the purse. They are no longer dependent on such taxes as the governed may agree to pay. The governed, on the contrary, are wholly dependent on the Government for whatever share they may be allowed out of the proceeds of the Government-owned industries, which are, of course, their only possible source of livelihood in a socialized community.

A MEMBER of the present administration tried to reassure some sceptics the other night by explaining that he was only an evolutionary socialist and that he had never read Karl Marx. In other words, one must presume, he had so little practical confidence in Socialism that he wished to see it applied chiefly after he was dead, but so much theoretical confidence that he did not think it worth while even to enquire into its intellectual credentials. Oddly enough, however, he seemed to think that his own enigmatic position in regard to socialism provided a strong reason why his listeners should vote for his colleagues whose confidence in Socialism was so much more robust that it had led them to put into their election programme exactly as many key industries as it was physically possible to nationalize within the lifetime of one Parliament.

SOMEWHAT paradoxically, the greatest danger to the Conservative Party at the next election lies in the general weakness of the Government's record. There is a great temptation to attack on too broad a front. The financial operations of Dr. Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps provide one tempting target and the state of our defence forces another. Our foreign policy has been notably unsuccessful, while at home high prices, short supplies, inadequate rations and endless queues reveal a remarkably unattractive vista. But against a harsh measure of austerity, the Government can and will set their record of full employment and a great extension of the Social Services, for which they will claim, and may even receive, the credit, however illogical that may be. Moreover, although it is true that the Government's financial policy must ultimately lead to bankruptcy and their foreign policy to a friendless isolation, these consequences are not yet plain to the voters. If the election campaign is allowed to degenerate into a series of complex technical arguments as to the probable consequences in the future of past transactions it will not generate either enough enthusiasm or enough anxiety to produce any marked turn-over of votes. The Conservative Party must fight the election as the creator of the social services and as the critics of a Government which by its profligate finance and its socialist measures has nearly halved the value of the £, and has thus nearly doubled the cost of our imported food and raw materials. This must in the very short run reduce the value of all the social service benefits. Socialism, in other words, has failed. If it continues, it will mean a further devaluation to the point when our food and raw materials from abroad will become unobtainable and the whole structure of the social services will collapse.

NOT only is this all literally true, but the argument rests on the admitted fact of a devaluation which has already taken place and on the socialization of key industries which has already resulted in severe losses without even a pretence of public benefit. The railways are dearer, dirtier and no more punctual than they were; only the profits have disappeared. Coal is bad and expensive, and the miners are deeply discontented. No one even pretends that the gas or electricity supply has improved; it has merely become

much more expensive. Yet in the face of these facts, and with the social services already in jeopardy, the Government propose further wide measures of nationalization which can only lead us to disaster.

THE tragedy of our time is that this is all true. It sounds too bad to be true. It savours of partisan rancour. Whatever the truth may be, the average voter will say, it cannot be as bad as that. Unfortunately, it is, but it will only be made plain to the electorate if the campaign is concentrated on these issues. As in war, so in politics, the opposing force must be pinned down and forced to meet the full force of the attack on the ground we choose. No one understands this essential military principle better than Mr. Winston Churchill, to whom not only the Conservative Party but a clear majority of the whole country look confidently for leadership in the fight that lies before us.

DOUGLAS JERROLD.

THE WITCH

BLACK swallow from the wilderness
And white dove from the shore
Flying high towards my home,
Lodge in the apple-tree in my courtyard
And tell my wife, my only love,
She should become a nun, or marry,
Dye her clothes and dress in black
And wait and hope for me no more;
For they have married me in Armenia
To an Armenian maid, a witch's daughter,
Who casts her spells on the stars and sky,
Enchants the birds so they cannot fly,
Enchants the rivers and stops their flow,
Enchants the sea and stills the waves,
And enchants me so that I cannot come.
If I try to come there is snow and rain,
When I turn there is starlight and sunshine again;
The saddle falls from my horse's back,
I gird my cord and the belt falls slack;
I write to her and the writing fades.

GREEK: TRADITIONAL.

BERNARD PITT.

SINK ME THE SHIP, MASTER GUNNER

By O. E. CROSTHWAITE EYRE*

SOMEWHERE, I think, in Pope—though I have not been able to trace the quotation—appears the couplet :—

Determined to be pleased the foolish band,
Grow more convinced the less they understand.

Nothing could be more true of the attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party. They are as wax in the hands of their masters, ready to approve anything which, however outrageous, can for the moment give the impression that a possible solution to the country's difficulties has been found. Difficulties which, indeed, to most of them can be dismissed in any event lightly, since they are no part of their true responsibility; but are due either to a Tory plot or unforeseen circumstances and beyond their control.

Repetition is dull but often necessary. The Socialists have no excuse for the economic plight into which they have brought the country. They were full partners in the Coalition Government and in 1945 knew exactly what they would have to face if they came into power. Indeed, they had the added advantage that those very difficulties having been foreseen by Mr. Winston Churchill's Coalition Government; over two years of active planning for the post-war period had already been achieved by a special Cabinet Committee. Their failure has been due to the rigid acceptance of the necessity to implement to the full Socialist economic doctrine however disastrously the first steps of any part of that doctrine have turned out in practice. Policy has been executed in some cases by ignoring the elementary truths in economics, but far more often in complete ignorance of them.

Any post-war period is bound to cause the gravest strain on a country's economy—be that country victor or vanquished. Competition will be keen for capital. Markets will have to be re-established. Manpower will have to be re-absorbed into industry, and industry itself converted back to peacetime use. In a highly industrialized island dependent for its life on importing food and raw materials, problems such as these demand the most careful husbanding of capital and industrial resources, and any wise government charged as to its first duty with the re-establishment of national life would refrain from making economic experiments until at least the major tasks had been completed. It is true that at such a time it would be theoretically possible to swing completely from a free economy to a Communist one, but it is certainly not possible to try and graft a Socialist controlled series of basic industries upon the free enterprise system of manufacture on which recovery depended. In 1945, within two months of coming into office, the Socialists were faced with the end of Lend Lease which made it more imperative than ever for Britain to lose no time in securing her economic independence. Whatever might have been politically possible in an election programme on the assumption that Lend Lease would continue, and that there would in consequence be a transitional period of outside economic support, would have been

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* *Mr. O. E. Crosthwaite Eyre is the Conservative Member of Parliament for the New Forest Division of Hampshire.*

realized by any competent or indeed honest government to be impossible with the withdrawal of American aid.

BUT not by Dr. Dalton. He rushed ahead with no thought to the future beyond the necessity of pleasing his backbenchers. They disliked high interest rates, therefore there should be cheap money, though this was bound to end in inflation. They disliked capitalism, therefore taxes should be high, irrespective of the harm that such taxes would do to the reconversion and redeployment of industry. They disliked private ownership, so his voice sounded loudest in the debates on the taking over of basic industry; although as Mr. Shinwell was bound to admit later, what had been for many years an election slogan had never been prepared in any detail for execution. Then came Bretton Woods, where, in order to get the dollars to purchase our necessary imports we had to sign terms which were impracticable of fulfilment. The American Loan enabled Socialism to continue for twelve months, but when it came to try and honour the pledges given to the United States in return of non-discrimination and convertibility, collapse immediately followed.

For a few weeks the life blood of our dollar resources was allowed to well forth, in the main to refresh and re-invigorate those to whom we owed least. Then Dr. Dalton had to acknowledge defeat and repudiate his commitments. But he was neither repentent nor desirous of telling the country that he had squandered what at the time of acceptance of Bretton Woods had been expected to cover our needs until 1949. It will not be till after 2000 A.D. that we shall have paid back to the U.S.A. what was wasted within twelve months by this particular Socialist experiment. Over the wireless Dr. Dalton spoke of people enjoying their holidays and coming back refreshed for the harder tasks that lay in front of them. It was this first big crisis that has set a standard for Ministerial behaviour. This and subsequent crises are greeted not as something demanding strong leadership and immediate action, but as slightly unfortunate occurrences to be played down and allayed with a dose of soothing Socialist syrup. After a few weeks, indeed, a few junior Ministers are allowed to plead for increased productivity because of the dangers confronting the nation, but this is always accompanied in case of unpopularity from the T.U.C. by equally emphatic statements by senior members of the Government firmly placing the blame for whatever has gone wrong on shoulders other than their own. How Socialist technique has advanced since Dr. Dalton's first attempt can be judged by Sir Stafford Cripps's broadcast on Devaluation.

WITH the exhaustion of the American Loan and with it a serious depletion of our hard currency reserves, some new method of financing Socialism had to be discovered. Once again the Americans came to the rescue, since whatever might be their views on Socialism or our economic policy the maintenance of stability in Western Europe was an essential of their Defence Plan. The formula of Marshall Aid was evolved with the aim of establishing a valid economy in Europe by 1952. By this time Dr. Dalton had given way to Sir Stafford Cripps. "Austerity" had become the watchword of the Government. But inflation had come, and the Government whilst paying, as usual, lip service to the need were not prepared to take the necessary action to meet it. The programme of social security had to go on, no matter what it cost or what through increased taxation might be the real benefit to the community. True, austerity gave the Socialists a chance further to penalize the capitalist, but by this time the goose that laid the golden eggs had lost all but her tail feathers and there was little left to pluck. Recourse had to be made to taxing industry, and the Profits Tax was invented. Of all the taxes the Government have introduced this is the worst. Not only does it cause unjustified hardship to the small investor who still predominates in industry and who is dependent

for his standard of life on the income from these investments, but through the tax on undistributed profits (which form the reserves from which industrial expansion and progress spring), it also milks our future productivity in a way which will cost us dear in four or five years time.

Marshall Aid, despite its size and its wide embracing nature, has failed to cure the dollar gap. This is more than understandable since the dollar gap will probably never be bridged until there is confidence in sterling. Sterling is the only world currency which, acting both in competition with and allied to the dollar, can bring economic stability to the world. The Socialists have recklessly invalidated the use of sterling as an international currency. Their bilateral agreements designed regardless to future cost to provide food and raw materials pledged, for instance, much of the best of our productivity for several years to come in return for Argentine meat and Russian coarse grain. They have bartered the very articles of first-class capital equipment which we should reserve for our own industry in order to ensure that we shall retain our ability to compete effectively in world markets. Those upon whom we can force exports have had to take whatever we can spare, and those not strong enough to dictate but whose imports must come to us are left with sterling which they wish to dispose of at the earliest possible moment.

WHATEVER the bad results of such a policy may be they do not compare with the effect of the release of vast sums of wartime debts—euphemistically called sterling balances. This has resulted in unrequited exports and ever-increasing demands for gold and dollars which we can only spare by further cuts in our own economy. Countries like India are spending dollars at a rate three times as high as they did before the war, whilst we ourselves have to prune and economize on our pre-war level of expenditure. The latest action of the Socialist Government is a perfect example. They have paid the sum of £8 mill-

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ions to the Persians for the use of Persian railways during the war. These railways were used by us to move war equipment to the Russian frontier; equipment which probably had a decisive bearing upon the safety of Persia during the war. These £8 millions were originally £5¾ millions but the Persians extracted from us a clause against devaluation and consequent upon devaluation have received a further £2¼ millions. Not only that, but all the sterling paid to them can be converted into dollars if the Persian Government wish to buy "essentials" in America. The effect of this and other similar agreements has been that probably in the last year one-fifth of our exports have left this country without securing any goods or services for us in return, and that we have had to pay out from our scanty reserves, gold and dollars to enable those we saved during the war to live at a far better rate than ourselves.

This policy could only end in a flight from sterling. This flight commenced long ago, and everyone except Sir Stafford Cripps knew that if it were not checked devaluation of the £ must follow. No action was taken to check it, and when the inevitable crash came sterling had to be devalued to a rate which never would have been necessary if facts had been faced and Socialism not placed before sanity. Even when devaluation was accepted no plans were made to make it effective. The Attlee cuts to stabilize internal expenditure are derisory, and whilst lip service is still paid to the necessity for restricting unrequited exports and releases from sterling balances, no action has yet been taken to effect a just settlement of these balances. It is little wonder that the £ has already fallen below the 2.80 which Sir Stafford Cripps said was the lowest to which the £ could go. The figures for the first month's trading since devaluation show that whilst the sterling value of exports to America has risen noticeably the yield of dollars those exports make is less than that before devaluation.

IT is certain, too, that raw materials like rubber, tin and wool which have been some of our principal dollar earnings, must now bring us in less; since for any such materials which command a world price, it is impossible to place a separate hard currency value upon them. It already seems as though devaluation has not only provided no immediate relief for our distress but has further increased the present strain on our economy. It is no wonder that Sir Stafford Cripps defending devaluation at his Press Conference on the 19th September, said:—

"At the end of the war we all thought it was going to be easier than it turned out to be in the economic sphere, and we have been trying to deal with it by a series of temporary expedients which have led to a series of crises as each expedient has been exhausted."

These four years should be an object lesson. They show to what use a parliamentary majority can be put by an executive if that majority be merely a party weapon and not have as a first consideration its wider duties as an instrument of government. We have been brought low, and face now a crisis by the standard of which 1931 pales into insignificance. The Socialists, even if some of them realized the gravity, to a man refused to admit it. To them Socialism cannot be wrong. The theory preached for fifty years must be right, and if it be not, then there is no virtue in or reason for England. They lay themselves open to the charge that, like Hitler, they preferred to bring down their country in ruins rather than admit of mistakes. They—though in as base a context as the original was noble—revive Sir Richard Grenville's last instruction :—

Sink me the Ship, Master Gunner, split
her in twain . . . .

WILTSHIRE DOWNS

HERE, where the white horse prints with languid hoof
The chalk-diluted grass, and where the daisies
Dapple him with little nubs of gold,
They sleep, with the long turf barrow for their roof,
Each with his beaker clasped, his beads, his stone,
Each with his thoughts still locked in that bare bone,
And no one knows if fear or sorrow came
To these, our forefathers, who died alone.

Here, in the high turf towers and ribs of land,
When forests clotted where now our thick towns lie,
Watching their small and ochre-yellow sheep,
They lived, and lit their fires, and came to die
Looking on these same stars, that sharp as sand
Or chips of granite, sparkled in the sky,
Like flakes that from a flint, a vessel flew
And raised the man to kinship with his God.

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.

THE FAILURE OF ERNEST BEVIN

By ANTHONY NUTTING*

FOR many months the British Press and public have been deluged with economics. Words and phrases such as the balance of payments, adverse terms of trade, dollar deficits, and so on have become common-place in every newspaper. How much of all this is understood is open to question. But at least a growing proportion of people are becoming increasingly aware that Britain is making no headway in the struggle to pay her way in the world. What has passed almost unnoticed in this welter of economic fact and comment is the parallel and progressive deterioration of Britain's foreign relations. No doubt this has had its advantages for Mr. Bevin personally. For there can be few members of the present Cabinet who need, more than he, a smokescreen to conceal from the public gaze a long catalogue of failure and lost opportunity. But this personal advantage for the Foreign Secretary is not shared by the nation. And it is high time that the bankruptcy of Mr. Bevin's policy should be exposed.

When the Labour Government took office in 1945, there were many who feared that they would drastically reorientate British foreign policy. Mr. Harold Laski, as Chairman of the Labour Party Executive at that time, had publicly announced that Britain was to have "a socialist foreign policy" involving our withdrawal from Greece and similar acts of appeasement in face of Russian pressure. It was therefore with no small feeling of relief that Mr. Bevin's first speech in Parliament on foreign affairs was heard. That nothing positive was said by the Foreign Secretary on that occasion was hardly to be wondered at, since he had only just assumed office. And at any rate, the speech did give the lie direct to Mr. Laski and thus allayed the fears which he had aroused that the advent of a Socialist Government heralded a Socialist foreign policy. What no one could foretell at the time was that we were to have no foreign policy at all, still less that the Foreign Secretary would allow the Chancellor of the Exchequer within four years to drag Britain into virtual economic isolation from her best friends and allies in Europe. Yet that is precisely what has happened.

When Mr. Bevin took over the Foreign Office, Britain's prestige abroad had seldom been higher. Throughout six years of war Britain had held the moral leadership of the civilized and democratic world. All the quantitative might and effort of the United States had not dimmed the brilliance of our fame and reputation. The British Empire stood united as never before by the victory for common ideals over common dangers. The United States were ready and resolved to play their part by every means open to them to assist European recovery. Our friends—and even our former enemies in Europe—looked to us to help and lead them through the crucial difficulties of political and economic reconstruction. Seldom can any British Foreign Secretary have had such a stirring call to action, or so many moral assets with which to answer it.

How tragically Mr. Bevin has failed to respond to this call, and how carelessly he has allowed these assets to wither away is a disaster which may take more years to repair than it took to bring about. For the truth of this tragedy is that no survey of Britain's foreign relations today can fail to reveal that we have

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created suspicion out of trust and disillusionment out of hope. Not only have we allowed one opportunity of leadership after another to slip by, but by turning our backs on Europe, as upon the Empire, we have turned friendship into hostility and unity into a desperate unilateral scramble for survival. Areas of vital strategic importance such as the Middle East have been left not only unguarded, but restive and hostile to Britain. In his handling of the Palestine problem Mr. Bevin has incurred the enmity of Jew and Arab alike. France, Italy and Germany—all keystones in the structure of European recovery—have looked to us in vain for a lead and, as British policy has become in recent months more and more isolationist and ignorant of European needs, they have shown in word and deed an increasing hostility born of frustrated faith.

THE lack of any constructive leadership by Britain in Germany has gone a long way in losing inestimable advantages for us and for Europe as a whole. No Foreign Secretary with a real grasp of political matters would have allowed such a time-lag as two years to elapse between the final division and dismemberment of Germany by Soviet policy and the reconstruction of some kind of democratic government in that portion for which the Western Allies are responsible. Nor would any Minister with a real knowledge of the economic situation of Germany after the war, have delayed so long the institution of currency reform. Dismantling was allowed to become a first-class issue at the recent German Elections. Why could this question not have been settled and got out of the way before German politicians found the occasion to vie with one another in the virulence of their denunciations of a policy which they not unreasonably described as deliberately blowing up the prospects of employment for German workers? How on earth were the Germans to understand that demolishing a typewriter factory in the Ruhr would contribute in the age of the atomic bomb to the security of Europe? At the very least we should have reviewed before the Elections the list of plants to be dismantled. This question has presumably been discussed by Mr. Bevin and his French and American colleagues at their recent Paris meeting, though at the time of writing no statement has been made. But meanwhile its exploitation for German political purposes has destroyed a large measure of the good will which was won for us by the Berlin air-lift.

ADMITTEDLY there is no more delicate question for the Western Allies to solve than the problem of reconciling security against further German aggression with the recovery of Germany's economy. Admittedly no decision can be reached on this question without French agreement. The French have good reason to act with caution in this matter. But a recent officially inspired article in the *Figaro* signified a considerable change in French opinion on Germany, when it remarked that "Germany's return to a position similar to that of other Powers is inevitable. . . . Not only is the occupation essentially a provisional measure, but the Russians will always seek to outbid the Western Allies by granting Germany what they refuse. . . . The new Germany will [therefore] be made with the Russians if it is not made with the Western Allies". France would probably modify her views still further and welcome Germany into the European fold far more readily if she could feel sure that European union is a reality and that Britain will always remain a partner in it. But how far have we tried to assure her of our good intentions and to urge her willingly to accept some settlement of the German problem? And how far have we been content in our area of responsibility merely to sit back and do nothing but toy ineffectively with the myth that all good things in Germany, including security, will flow from socializing that part of German industry which we do not demolish.

Germany is recovering rapidly, because of the efforts and resolve of the German people and not in anyway because of any great

concerted policy of assistance from Britain and her partners. There is an enormous need and desire in Germany for "re-education", but not for the kind which is supplied by the British Council. We should be helping German, and hence European, recovery by assisting German exports to pay Germany's way in the world for her. We have the necessary organizations and experience to do this without detriment to ourselves. If we fail and Germany staggers to her feet unaided by us, we may well find that, out of the paralysis of policy which flows from the fear of reviving the German menace, we have recreated just that very menace.

In some respects our performance with Italy has been even worse than with Germany. Count Sforza, the Italian Foreign Minister, gave vent to some long, pent-up exasperation early in October, when he expressed his "concern about the little importance which London seems to attach not only to the interests, but also to the feelings of the Italian people". Count Sforza had kept silent for a long time under great provocation from British slights on the one hand and violent personal attacks upon him by the Italian Press on the other. He might well have been excused for attacking us when we first opposed Italian claims to the return of Eritrea, more especially since Italy undertook to grant Eritrea full independence. Count Sforza again had cause for complaint when Mr. Bevin opposed Italy's participation in the Atlantic Pact, only to find himself overruled by the French, who not unnaturally wanted Italian membership of the Pact to give the finishing touches to a "Cordon Sanitaire" between France and the East. It would really not be unfair to the Foreign Secretary to say that throughout his tenure of office he has failed to realize the importance of Italy to the stability of democratic Europe, and that he has ignored not only the immensity of Italy's achievements in political and economic recovery, but also the value and significance which these achievements have for Britain. No country has had a more difficult and dangerous problem to solve than Italy since the end of the war. No country, unaided by Allied bayonets, has dealt more effectively with the Communist menace. No country has solved in a shorter time the desperate problem of replacing a Fascist dictatorship of over twenty years' standing by decent democratic government. No country has received less encouragement from Britain.

RELATIONS with our French friends are scarcely better. France has had strong cause to complain of Britain's isolationism. One of the most Anglophile of French statesmen, M. Leon Blum, had some bitter words to say upon the British Government's failure to consult France before they devalued the pound. "On the morrow of Strasbourg," he said, "when European solidarity was beginning to take shape, we must recognize that an unexpected and formidable argument has been handed to the sceptics. I must confess to some bitter regret." The French Finance Minister at the time described our action as a one-sided declaration of economic war upon France. Who could blame him for this outburst? Only a few days before, British Government representatives had been paying lip service at Strasbourg to the ideal of international co-operation. And at that very moment the Government whom they represented were planning to take one of the biggest steps ever taken in the direction of rigid economic autarchy, and to reject quite ruthlessly all ideas of economic co-operation with Europe, without so much as deigning to inform those who would be most gravely affected by this decision until twenty-four hours before it was put into effect.

Of how much concern this was to the Foreign Secretary is demonstrated clearly enough by the fact that he never insisted on informing M. Petsche when they were in Washington together in September. It can therefore have concerned him little more that this move should have been the principal cause of the almost immediate fall of the first stable government which France has produced

since the war. Yet this is a matter of much concern to France and to Western Union, which can only be weakened by any political instability amongst its members.

BUT Mr. Bevin is not concerned with politics abroad. And it is in that fact that his principal failure as Britain's Foreign Secretary lies. Mr. Bevin has time and again said that economics are all that matter to the world today. "Give people plenty to eat and full employment and all will be well." A point of view understandable for a Trades Union leader, but pathetically inadequate for a Foreign Secretary. Yet since he does not understand foreign economics any better than foreign politics, Mr. Bevin has gradually been forced to abdicate his position as the man at the wheel of Britain's external relations to Sir Stafford Cripps, the arch-isolationist. Gradually, therefore, the British Government has become less inclined to co-operate with their friends and neighbours and, as the need for Britain to assume a constructive lead in Europe has grown ever more urgent, so has Britain's reluctance to answer the call grown more determined.

It is all very well for the Foreign Secretary to rest on the laurels which he earned for the stand he took against the Soviet Union in the earlier days of the United Nations. He could hardly have acted otherwise, but these achievements were purely negative. If Mr. Molotov said no a hundred times, Mr. Bevin said it almost as often. Nothing that he did then enhanced any positive advance towards European security or stability.

It is true that somewhat belatedly he took the initiative in promoting Western Union—though not before Mr. Eden had spent weary hours in the House of Commons urging this step upon him. It is true, too, that he was not slow to answer Mr. Marshall's offer of a European Recovery Programme. (People seldom are slow to accept the offer of a bountiful loan.) And that the gathering of sixteen European nations, that we know as O.E.E.C., was partly the result of Mr. Bevin's response is an unarguable fact. But the Foreign Secretary's behaviour at this gathering of European nations has been altogether too much that of the blasé socialite who thinks it smart to arrive late at a party and leave early. Or did Sir Stafford Cripps, acting as the ever-present chaperon, drag him away in case he might get on too well with the other guests?

WHICHEVER may be the true version, the result is the same—that at a time when British leadership and partnership was never more seriously needed in the world, the British Foreign Secretary has allowed his Government to stand aloof concentrating all their energies on trying to work out, in very unsplendid isolation, a Socialist experiment on borrowed money.

Not only have we failed to answer Europe's call for British leadership, but we are in grave danger of rapidly exhausting those abundant reserves of American faith and trust in us as the lynch-pin of European political and economic recovery. The Atlantic Pact, Western Union and the O.E.E.C. are in existence, it is true. But they can be no more than the skeleton of the civilized world's arrangements to fight for political and economic security. The flesh must be a true co-operation in all political, military and economic matters which affect Europe. And the initiative for ensuring that co-operation rests with Britain, and with Britain alone. Just as it is to the U.S.A. that the world looks for material help, so it is to Britain that they look for moral leadership. Mr. Bevin's tragedy is that, while the United States have fulfilled their hopes, he has failed them.

THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

By THE MARQUIS del MORAL

WHEN I left Matabeleland towards the end of September, 1896, over fifty-two years ago, I little thought that my next view of this country would be from the cockpit of a Viking flying over the Great Zambesi River—I do not count a five days' visit at the opening of the railway at Bulawayo on 4th November, 1897. The celebrations for this great event had apparently affected the first train from Bulawayo to the south, as we had a nasty accident about 2 a.m. at Khami River, six miles from Bulawayo, where we remained most of the following day till a partly new train was provided. The driver put the accident down to "sunstroke" and not to the five days' celebrations!

The most vital act in the history of Southern Rhodesia was the grant of self-government in 1923, by which the country was freed from the octopus-like trammels of the Colonial Office. It is governed by a Parliament of elected members and a Speaker who is appointed. The Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, is the Head of the Government.

LIKE most young countries, its demand for money for development outstrips its income. The plans for development are far-sighted. Tobacco in Mashonaland has brought wealth and development has proceeded apace.

A few months ago, Mr. Whitehead—the Minister for Finance—brought forward a scheme for taxation of the tobacco industry under a tax of 20 per cent which roused the indignation of tobacco growers. The matter was conducted in a stupid manner, and the tax fell like a bombshell. Common sense indicated that the proper remedy would have been to call the tobacco growers into consultation, explain the necessity for taxation, and with their agreement, to realize the sum required—£2 million. The Minister of Finance concerned rather likes to think he is "tough" and such a placid method of consultation beneath him, and so the tax was announced. Shortly before, the Minister had gone to England for consultation about other matters, so the storm broke unexpectedly on the devoted head of the Prime Minister, whose equanimity was equal to the occasion, but deplored, no doubt, the necessity that *he* should have to face the music, perhaps better described—the storm. After discussion the tax was reduced by the Government to 15 per cent, and recently to a compulsory loan, and the "toughness" of the Minister of Finance has now subsided to what may be described as the murmur of ripples on the beach after a storm. It is, at any rate, more reasonable that the tobacco growers should receive some interest on their compulsory loan.

THE natural complaint of tobacco growers was that the tax was selective and imposed on a section only of the population. There is no doubt that the development of the tobacco industry has been, and is, a most important and valuable asset in the economic life of the country.

The Minister of Finance may well have learnt a lesson on the subject of hasty legislation, because for some two years before when such a tax was suggested he had opposed it, until he decided to display his "toughness".

The development of farming in recent years has been great, and with the proper conservation of water *and* soil, should increase the great natural resources of the country.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

THE most striking development in this young country is the use of electric power, and to me a very remarkable one, when I remember the wild nature of the country fifty years ago. The Electricity Supply Act of July, 1936, constituted the Electricity Supply Commission to investigate new and additional facilities for the supply of electricity and co-ordination of the existing undertakings. At that time Salisbury and Bulawayo and the small country towns of Gwelo, Gatooma and Umtali had their generating stations for local supply, and to mines in their immediate vicinity. The Commission supplied a grid system, supplying farms, mines and industries outside the municipal area. It acquired the stations of Umtali, on the eastern border, of Gatooma, one hundred miles distant, and of Gwelo, two hundred miles, and gave a bulk supply in return. Stations were expanded, and several networks designed for a grid to cover the whole Colony. Bulawayo and Salisbury retained their power stations, in agreement to supply the Commission in bulk. New power stations were constituted at Gwanda and Umniati and were in service immediately prior to the war; the Shabani station began to operate after war began.

When the municipal power stations were acquired the total capacity was 6,000 kW., and the power lines to areas beyond the municipal boundaries only amounted to thirty-five miles. By 1939 the Commission had extended these to a capacity of 24,850 kW., over six hundred miles of lines, and about ten million units of electricity were sold. To-day the Commission has 57,000 kW. installed, and a further 60,000 kW. is being erected. The power lines now total three thousand route miles, and units sold annually amount to about two hundred million.

Gwelo and Gatooma power stations are now closed owing to the further development of the grid.

A further addition of one thousand miles to the present grid will complete the first stage in the supply to the Colony. Every populated area with development potential—agricultural, mineral or industrial—will have power available. The second stage will soon begin in building up the system as the load develops. A third stage is contemplated as to the considerable reduction of power costs on the exploitation of mineral resources. Present cost of sale of power about .85 pence per unit in spite of the rapid expansion of the time-lag before load reaches an appropriate point in any area, sparseness of population and high costs. Even at this, farmers can obtain power at 1s. 2d. per unit, and large users find the charges highly economical. Even so, there are one or two small towns which consider the charges too high, but their attitude resembles somewhat that of some present-day workers who want something for nothing.

The Kariba Gorge scheme on the Zambesi is being investigated for the development of cheap water power. It is a joint scheme with Northern Rhodesia, and within the next six months a full report on its possibilities may be available. It is considered that over 500,000 kW. can be developed for transmission to both territories—an additional source of power will be the Kafue River in Northern Rhodesia.

THE distances for transmission are well within modern practice. The dam to block the gorge will be about 300 feet in height and will create an artificial lake about 1,200 square miles in area. The control of the river downstream and irrigation possibilities might be described as immense.

The able members of the Commission are the Chairman, A. B. Cowen, O.B.E., etc., members J. Reid Rowland, C.B.E., and J. W. Phillips, O.B.E.

No attempt has been made to utilize the power of the Victoria Falls on the Zambesi

River, though forty years ago a company calling itself by this name came into existence in Johannesburg. Apparently the power possible from that source would be capable of perhaps 250,000 kW. but with interference to the volume of water passing over the Falls. The power capable of production under the Kariba Gorge scheme would be considerably greater and in the neighbourhood of 750,000 kW.

The Kariba Gorge scheme, if adopted, will be very costly, but the results will be of enormous benefit to Northern and Southern Rhodesia, particularly in the near future.

FEDERATION

THE federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland is important and vital—far better would be "amalgamation" than "federation" on the Australian system. It has everything to recommend it, provided there is no interference. The great Wankie coalfield, irrigation, electricity supply and development of the great copper and iron mines in Northern and the gold and other minerals in Southern Rhodesia assure the great progress of the United Provinces.

An overriding advantage is that the Indian population of the three countries is only about 9,000, and restrictions on infiltration or immigration of Indians could be arranged to prevent the serious inroads that have occurred in Natal, Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda.

The Indian trader has been found to exploit and overcharge the African Natives to a shameful degree in parts of Africa, and the Governments concerned have not restrained him as they should have done. Two or three months ago a Commission in Tanganyika reported that in purchasing cotton grown by the native Africans, the latter had been deprived of 10 per cent of their price by secret orders issued to Indian buyers.

The riots in Natal a few months ago, and within the last few weeks at Kampala on Lake Victoria, capital of Uganda, are only the beginning of the trouble to be expected in the future, unless very strong action is taken to restrain the predatory methods of Indian traders. The Zulus are by far the finest race of Africans, mentally and physically, and they will not put up with a continuance of the weak policy hitherto adopted in South Africa. When Indians were imported into Natal about sixty years ago to work the sugar plantations, it was agreed that they were to be returned to India after a period of service. This agreement was not carried out, with the consequence that to-day the Indian population has increased to 300,000 at least. In Tanganyika to-day the Indian population is about 100,000 and increasing.

The Portuguese have no trouble with Indian traders or residents, because greater discipline is exacted and no Indian is allowed to own land, and with this control no trouble occurs. Durban is an example of this disadvantage of allowing Indian ownership of town property. In Nairobi the same thing has occurred, where the ownership of hotels and much of the main street has passed into Indian hands. If they wish to acquire property an Indian will offer a fantastic price to obtain it, backed by rich Indian firms or individuals.

The great importance, for the protection of the African Native from those who despoil him, is that it is he on whom the country must depend for the necessary labour. From an economic point of view the ridiculously high wages demanded by white labour make the latter an economic impossibility in the future of Africa. It has obviously an effect on the value of farms; for instance, a farm of 3,000 acres cannot be worked by white labour at a reasonable cost—in any case it is not available—and if it were would be too expensive to work satisfactorily. Therefore, the key to the value of a farm is the amount of Native labour living on the farm or nearby and available for work. Without this, and the prospect of getting it from Portuguese territory or Nyasaland, the value of that farm is depreciated by a considerable figure.

A GREAT difficulty that the White settlers in Africa, British or Dutch, have always had to contend with has been the ignorance of the Colonial Office on the Native question. This began over a hundred years ago, when the Missionary Societies and Aborigines Protection Society represented the Colonial settler as a murderer and scoundrel in his dealings with the natives, in spite of evidence to the contrary and the statements of humane and reputable colonists. McCaul Theal in his *History of South Africa* deals with this at great length, and emphasizes the fact that the greater part of the bad feeling between Boer and British resulted from the actions of the Colonial Office and successive Colonial Secretaries of State.

It is the interference to-day by the Colonial Office in the Native question which is to be feared. An attempt to set up anything resembling a trades union among a crude race of natives is to be deplored, for its after effects and the dangers brought in its trail. It is an interference which should be strongly opposed. The people administering countries like the Rhodesias know best the methods of treatment. African labour is the life-blood of the country, and is of vital importance to its future, and this insures fair treatment in wages and food, otherwise that labour goes elsewhere where conditions may be better.

The African is essential to the development of the country and he can be taught, with patience and careful teaching, to do work that white men do. I have recently seen this in several cases and have seen the work as well done as that by white men. If he cannot be so taught, as some men assert, then the future of the country, from an economic standpoint, is impossible. In Rhodesia the white population is about 100,000 and the native 3½ million.

THE development in road system has been slow. There are a few main roads, e.g., Salisbury to Bulawayo, Salisbury to east and south-east towards the Portuguese border, towards the Zambesi, Gatooma and Bulawayo to Victoria Falls. The surface is built up and two tar strips are laid down for car wheels, but the subsidiary roads to farms and small towns are still only tracks. The condition is good enough for the local traffic, with a fair amount of bumpiness. Under present conditions this should suffice locally; it is the main roads which require better upkeep.

On the farms—and particularly tobacco farms—bricks are made from the local ant-heaps and indifferently burnt, but seem to be sufficiently strong for construction of tobacco-drying barns, etc. As for the so-called "bricks" made for sale in and around Salisbury and Bulawayo, it is a high compliment to describe them by the name, except in the case of one or two fields where excellent bricks, tiles, pipes, etc., are made. In the majority the class of "brick" now used in building makes one wonder whether in fifteen years half the houses will not collapse, unless the stucco itself holds them up! It is not the want of good clay but the ignorance of the average brickmakers and want of suitable machinery which is at fault.

THE preservation of wild animals is an important money-making asset, as has been proved in the Kruger National Park in the Transvaal. In 1902 Colonel J. Stevenson Hamilton was appointed Warden with several White rangers and subsidiary Native rangers. During forty-four years' tenancy of his Wardenship he has done remarkable work in increasing the number of wild animals, and in encouraging the return of elephants, rhinoceri and others. I was in the Sabi Game Reserve in 1902 off and on for two years, investigating the report of millions buried by President Kruger on his leisurely flight from the Transvaal. There were no roads, but occasional tracks made by wild animals; all food had to be carried, and we were by honour bound not to shoot game except "for the pot". To-day there are 1,200 miles of roads, hostels and camping places for visitors during June and July (winter), when

there is less risk of being bitten by the anopheles (malaria) mosquito. In 1947 there were 40,000 visitors by car and a similar number in 1948. The charges are reasonable, and an important financial return to the Union Government. Elephants seem to appreciate the car roads as resting places, and when this occurs for several hours it is nothing for five hundred cars to be held up for twenty miles during those hours, the only drawback to enjoyment being the sulphurous and blasphemous language of the visitors. No one, so far, has been venturesome enough to disturb the elephantine slumbers. Lions and other animals are to be seen within twenty-five yards of the passing cars, and ignore them.

The splendid success of this game reserve has been the model for other Reserves in other parts of Africa. The Wankie Reserve near the great Wankie coalfields has been established in Southern Rhodesia. Denizens from it of wild parts on the eastern border occasionally stray to civilization. Only a few weeks ago six lions were on a farm twelve miles from Salisbury, killing cattle; two strayed to within six miles of Salisbury, and others visited the Helensvale Brickfield on two evenings! Such visits did not encourage walking in the dusk of the evening. Two months ago several elephants strolled to within a few miles of Bulawayo; one with its calf caused anxiety, as everyone leaves a large space of country where such mother and infant is concerned. Elephants think nothing of travelling fifty miles a day.

A YEAR or two ago two men were motoring to Beira, and in the Amatonga Forest left their car with very hot radiator on the road while they ate some sandwiches under a shady clump. Two elephants bent on seeing the strange object smelt it over, but one bent on closer investigation burnt its trunk on the radiator, screamed with rage, reared its five tons of flesh on hind legs, and stamped the car into what resembled flat iron. The travellers carefully refrained from interference with such playfulness, and remained carefully hidden till another car gave them a lift.

People who have lived some time in Rhodesia take things rather as a matter of course with due regard to the exercise of a little care. Even an occasional visit from a 12-foot crocodile (measured by the eye!) from the former bathing pool to the bank just below the house caused no excitement beyond a rifle shot. This did not, however, deter the crocs later visits to this favourite spot.

The only sensible policy in dealing with African countries connected with Great Britain is to leave the administration of them to the people living there, who know and understand their needs. Fears of bad treatment of the Natives are exaggerated—self interest in the necessity of Native labour alone is bound to lead to proper care of Native interests, or this labour will go where it is more appreciated. Interference by officials without Colonial experience can do great harm and will only increase but never solve such difficulties peculiar to the country.

Theatre

CHECHOV, SALVATOR DALI AND OTHERS

By HUBERT GRIFFITH

THE SEAGULL. By Chechov. *St James's.*

SALOMÉ. By Strauss-Wilde. *Covent Garden.*

I CONVERSED the other day in a Chelsea tavern with a commercial gentleman who was giving his opinion, at the top of his voice, of Chechov's "*The Seagull*" (then at the Lyric, Hammersmith, now transferred to the St. James's), to which he had absent-mindedly strayed.

It was obviously his first visit to any Chechov play, and equally obviously he hadn't thought much of it—"What did it all *mean*? Everybody was in *love*!—but all with the wrong *people*, who weren't in love with *them*! Why did the boy go off and shoot himself at the end?—what good did *that* do him? And the way it was announced, too!—that whisper from the Doctor to another man, both in a corner of the stage, '*Get Arkadina away somewhere or other. The fact is, that Konstantin has shot himself*'. And down comes the curtain!—what a way to announce a suicide! And what was the *moral* of it all? That middle-aged actress seemed to be the only one of the whole bunch who was enjoying life—but *she* is made out to be tough and a go-getter! Is the moral that one's got to be tough and a go-getter to enjoy life?" and so on and so on, at considerable length and reiteration.

Now this perfectly sincere and passionate narration would have seemed much more naïve than it did to me if I hadn't realized that what he was saying was almost an exact transcript of what many of the London critics, *and* the intellectual Sunday-night audiences of the Stage Society, had said forty or so years ago when the then obscurities of Chechov were first dragged in front of their puzzled eyes. In other words, to those who go to few plays, or are brought up on pat, well-made West-end plays, Chechov is an acquired taste, and no one need be blamed for not "getting" him from the beginning. And inasmuch as the play did seem to have exerted some frightful fascination on my man—or he would not have gone on talking about it so long—one did feel tempted to suggest a reason or two why it was slightly different from most other plays . . . but time was too short, and one could only suggest giving Chehov a seccond chance.

And now, on reflection . . . Why does "*The Seagull*" seem to me the deepest and tenderest, the most purely lovely, play in the whole of the modern dramatic repertory—the play for which I would probably sacrifice any one other play of the modern world—and perhaps of the classic world as well?

Some people would say that it is not as "great" a play as "*The Cherry Orchard*", because in addition to being a dramatic masterpiece, "*The Cherry Orchard*" is a conscious delineation of an entire epoch, and an accurate prediction of its downfall—in other words, a social document of the first importance blended into an artistic masterpiece—in which it is probably unique in the world's literature.

But I'm not sure that I don't prefer "*The Seagull*". Here all the characters are entirely pre-occupied with themselves, wrapped up in themselves, their emotions and their aspirations—wrapped, too, in Chechov's circumambient understanding, irony and tolerance. (It is possible that he himself

occasionally speaks through the mouth of Dorn the middle-aged doctor, who scatter gentle philosophy over them. You remember that wonderful moment at the curtain of the first act where, after so much quarrelling and uproar, the girl Masha suddenly throws herself on his shoulder and declares that she is in love with the young writer Konstantin — the wrong man again—and he murmers "How; emotional they all are—how emotional! And what a lot of love! ... O, the magic of the lake ...! (*Gently*) But what can I do for you, my child? What? What?" Dorn is a wonderful part. But then they are each and all wonderful parts; the actress, the would-be actress, the established writer, the young 'prentice writer, the retired Civil Servants with all their ambitions unfulfilled, taking their ease in that country house beside the lake—in that golden Indian summer of an age just before the Deluge.

And the humour of it! "O, what could be more boring than this sweet country boredom!" says the actress Arkadina as they all sit on the lawn in the sunshine, "It is charming to listen to you, my friends; delightful to hear you airing your philosophies—but give *me* a nice hotel bedroom where I can study my part". That is a monumental phrase. How often has one had theatrical guests in the country—and found that the idler everyone becomes, and the more lovely the country sunlight grows, the more they are aching to be back in a stuffy rehearsal room. And then there is Sorin, the landlord, denied horses by his bailiff (because the carriage horses are away in the fields carting the rye), striking the croquet-lawn with his stick and shouting, "Send *all* the horses to me *here*, immediately!" There is more fun in the multiple tragedies of this play than in any dozen modern farces.

It is a superb cast, Nicholas Hannen the Dorn, Isabel Jeans the Madame Arkadina, Ian Hunter the Trigorin, Paul Schofield the Konstantin, Hazel Terry (much the best Masha I have ever seen, giving a fling of defiant bravura to the girl's despair—which increases its intensity), Philip Stainton the Sorin. If you have seen "*The Seagull*" many times, go and see it again; it will reveal new mysteries of beauty to you. If it's your first Chechov—go to it with an open mind, and see what you get out of it.

I have two criticisms to make of the present otherwise admirable production by Miss Irene Hentschel. I don't know why a foreign actress should have been chosen for the glorious young girl's part of Nina—can't we scrape together *any* young actresses of our own? Especially as in a couple of year's residence Miss Mai Zetterling has not apparently bothered to learn the elements of stage speech. She gabbled much of the part through like a precocious foreign infant of ten—"enxious" for "anxious", "leete" for "late", "warm and cossy" for "warm and cosy" and so forth. (But in this contention I am partly non-suited for remembering the electrifying Nina of Valerie Taylor not so very many years ago. But again, if Mai Zetterling had shown real dramatic power, one would have forgiven her her accent.)

The second point, not unimportant to those with an ear or language:—I cannot conceive why Miss Hentschel, having a classic translation already to her hand, the Constance Garnett version, should have gone in for any other.

I happen to know "*The Seagull*" pretty well—having gone through all its English translations, by Julius West, by Koteliansky, by Calderon (the present one); in having read the Russian original; and in having, moreover, bothered to go through the Russian original with an intelligent Russian with such perfect knowledge of the English language that he could tell me in four or five different illustrative words or phrases what Chechov did really mean, And in almost all cases it seemed to me, having some experience as translator myself, that Constance Garnett had, by a stroke of genius, hit off not only the precise Russian intention, but its most easy and colloquial rendering into English. In other words, the classic of all translations! And now the present version is

actually inaccurate! The phrase above that has always pleased me so much, about the "How boring is this sweet country boredom," is softened down into "How boring is this sweet country *life*!" or something of the sort. Why. Chechov himself had intentionally kept to the same stem-word, "*skutchnii*" and "*skuka.*" And in a much more important matter, literally and artistically: Nina's great opening speech, "*Men, lions, eagles and partridges . . . all living things . . . having completed their cycle of sorrow, are extinct . . . .*" The speech goes on to explain how, being now two hundred thousand years into the future, and the stars of the universe are dimmed, "*Yon poor moon now lights her lamp in vain.*" "*Poor*" is the operative word. It is the word, "*biednii,*" that Chechov used. It suggests in a single word the lights of the heavens gradually dying out, as indeed it is intended to. And yet the present translation, thinking that it will be one cleverer, goes straight back into the cliché—"yon *pale* moon"—reverting to Ivor Novello and Noel Coward when they are writing their musical-comedy lyrics. . . .

But these, however avoidable, are only spots on the sun—or the moon. Go and see "*The Seagull.*"

THE Richard Strauss-Oscar Wilde opera "*Salomé*" always seems to have raised some sort of uproar around itself. Sir Thomas Beecham has given an extremely diverting account of its first London production, that he himself conducted at Covent Garden forty years ago. Modifications not only in the action but in the text had been demanded by the Lord Chamberlain. These had been duly conceded and rehearsed. But on "the night" the singers, carried away by the excitement of the occasion, went straight back to the original text. As they were all singing in German, of course nobody noticed. And Sir Thomas was sent for at the end by the Lord Chamberlain, and warmly congratulated on the "artistic excellence" of his production. . . .

This time the excitement was aroused by the announcement that the super-surrealist, Salvator Dali, had been commissioned to do the décor and costumes. Knowing only a little of his work (and extremely disliking the little that I knew) I thought that the whole project fringed on the verge of lunacy. But I kept my head and I used my eyes, and what did I see? In all the years that I have been attending Covent Garden, watching Rhein-Maidens and Valkyries swimming about or charging about among the most palpable of painted canvas "flats", I have never seen the vast Covent Garden stage, as large as a polo-ground, put to such magnificent advantage as in Dali's "*Salomé.*"

The theme of the opera is barbaric and crude, sensuous and super-civilized—it is perfectly justifiable to surmise that Herod the Tetrarch's court in Judea was a mixture of Eastern splendour and Greek decadence. All this is suggested in the décor, with imaginative beauty as well—the colossal design of the peacock's tail, with the eyes that come alight is an inspiration. Moreover—and here a purely technical note has to be taken—the stage has been so "broken up" into low platforms as to conceal its uncontrollable size, to concentrate the interest of the action, and yet to give the singers only very low, shallow flights of steps to walk up and down—in other words, every inch has been used, while concealing its use. I hope that Mr. Roger Furse and other of our crack young decorators will go and take a look at the work (on this particular occasion) of M. Salvator Dali.

Madame Ljuba Welitsch's voice got purer, warmer and stronger as the evening wore on. I wished that Madame Welitsch had found time to sing in her dressing-room, and "at full voice", a couple of acts of some other opera before rushing on to the stage.

The members of the Opera House staff, the conductor Dr. Karl Rankl and so forth, who refused to take a curtain-call in protest against the Dali decorations were simply silly. If Dr. Rankl didn't like 'em, why didn't he resign his job? The members of the public who booed from the gallery had obviously come to boo from the beginning.

TWICE RICH: TWICE RUINED

By KENNETH HARE

WINCHCOMB, Gloucestershire; to-day a backwater, but once the capital city of a kingdom. Its main street takes an agreeably haphazard course, for it follows the general line of the Isborn, that little stream which meanders no less pleasantly in the shallow valley below; indeed Winchcomb's unstandardized appearance—so refreshing in a world which is becoming ever more mechanized—is one of the town's most lovable characteristics. At Winchcomb it is not of the operative that one thinks but the craftsman. In the midst of the town and surmounting its market-place, rises the tower of the superb fifteenth century church of St. Peter, ornamented, if that be indeed the word, with a series unique in England, of the most fantastic gargoyles.

One of these represents the Devil; another a less significant yet still imposing personality, Sir Ralph Boteler, to whose piety and munificence the church as we see it to-day is largely due. And here the sculptor has shown himself too prudent to indulge his normal vein of the grotesque. In Sir Ralph he shows us a humorous-looking and moustachioed gentleman who fought abroad in France and at home in the Wars of the Roses; and who might, so modern he looks, have served in either of the two world wars of our own distracted day.

OPPOSITE the church and across the road, stands the variously named "Jacobite" or "Jacobean" house—as though the two words were interchangeable!—a gem of the English Renaissance attributed to Inigo Jones. Amongst Winchcomb's inns, is the delightfully named "Corner Cupboard", where a great open hearth in the bar parlour speaks welcomingly of old English hospitality. And there is the "George Hotel", still partly galleried, with its staircase in the courtyard by which the pilgrims climbed to their bedchambers, for Winchcomb had its saint as will be told, and he became one of the most popular in the country. The "George" also possesses a magnificent medieval fire-place, and amongst other things, a fascinating collection of old pewter. But it is not only in the main street that the visitor will find old buildings of exceptional beauty. In one of the side streets, I came upon a jewel of a little house, and asked a young fellow who was passing, if he could give me any account of it.

"I suppose it has a name? Could you tell me the date, roughly? Or the name of the owner?"

"Me a Pole," came the unexpected reply, "no talk English".

I waited some ten minutes, for the street I was in gave upon the fields, and there was nothing to speak of in the way of traffic. Then I saw three men approaching, and plied them with the same questions I had the other.

"What do you call that house? I suppose it has a name?"

"We Czechoslovakians, no talk English."

Was I bewitched? I now took a bolder course, walked to the garden wall, and somewhat abashed by my own effrontery, pulled myself up by the parapet. From this coigne of vantage, I saw another façade of the house, the garden, and as I supposed, the owner himself, standing with his back towards me, raking in leisurely fashion the clippings of a hedge towards a bonfire.

"Excuse me, Sir?"

He did not stir a muscle.

"Sir! *Excuse*—"

By this time, I was hailing him as though he were a ship in the offing, but he continued raking, and now it began to dawn upon me that the man I was addressing was stone deaf.

"The house," I told myself, "does not want its name to be known". And I gave up the

unequal contest. Ours is so old a civilization that I fancy there is no English town or village which would not yield interesting matter for history, were the materials more readily accessible, and willing compilers of them to be found. Particularly is this the case with Gloucestershire, where the Romans constructed forums, baths, basilicas, and handsome country villas: true palaces; where they canalized the marshes, and constructed—and for greater security placed under the protection of the god Mercury—those enduring and undeviating roads which are still traceable to-day and in places still usable. The Empire disintegrated. The Legions were withdrawn. But when the resultant chaos subsided, no part of England more readily recaptured the arts of peace, than that which we now call Gloucestershire.

AT Winchcomb, a Roman settlement had been imposed upon an earlier British village, and this was destined to become the capital city of Mercia which was founded—A.D.584—by the Anglian King Crida. Even although this autocrat claimed descent from the god Woden, I do not propose to rehearse his achievements here; but it should be pertinent to list those modern counties which were comprised within Mercia's ample bounds, or the full significance of Winchcomb must inevitably escape us. These were then: Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Nottinghamshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. Brief mention must also be made of King Kenulf, for he founded and caused to be dedicated A.D.811, a truly magnificent abbey with the fortunes of which those of Winchcomb itself were to be intimately linked for above seven hundred years.

When Kenulf died, he left as his successor his son Kenelm, who ascended the throne at the early age of seven. What follows is related with many variations, and with a pronounced element of the marvellous. I abridge and synthesize. Driven by the blind lust of ambition, the child's eldest sister Quendred determined to make away with him that she might obtain the kingdom for herself. Many times she endeavoured to take him off by poison, but it was not Heaven's will that Kenelm should perish in this fashion. And now perceiving that all her efforts proved abortive, she corrupted the boy's tutor Askeberd with lavish gifts, and the assurance that when he had worked her will, he should possess her realm and person.

THE martyrdom of this holy child Kenelm was foretold him in a dream. For it seemed to him that, as he slept in his bed, he beheld a tree the top of which reached even unto Heaven and every branch of which was resplendent with shining gold. He beheld, at one and the same season, fair fruit, and blossom blowing, and innumerable wax-lights so glimmering and gleaming amidst its foliage as was glorious to behold. And it seemed to Kenelm that he climbed that tree. Then beheld he, in his vision, his tutor Askeberd approaching with an axe. And Askeberd felled that tree. And as it fell, Kenelm found himself metamorphosed into a white bird which took flight to Heaven with exceeding joy.

And Kenelm awakened troubled in mind, and related this his dream to his nurse Wolweline. She weeping and lamenting piteously, addressed him thus: "Alas! my sweetest child," cried she, "and shall the snares of your kinsfolk, and the evil counsels of your sister and your tutor prevail against you? Anguish grips my heart. The felling of the tree prefigures your own fall, and the bird that winged its happy flight unto Heaven, is your own soul, which shall make its delectable voyage thither after your martyrdom." Thus spake Wolweline, letting fall innumerable tears.

THEN this execrable traitor Askeberd led Kenelm into the neighbouring county of Worcestershire, feigning that he would take

him to view the pastime of hunting, and whilst the twain tarried in the forest, the boy lying upon the grass there, fell asleep. Then this cruel butcher fell to digging a grave. But Kenelm awakening, spake thus: "It is not here but in a more sequestered place, God decrees that my body shall lie. Take this stick—for the child carried one—and set it in the earth. When being planted this wand shall put forth leaves, that is the place which Heaven appoints for my burial."

And now it was nigh unto night but unmoved by what he had heard, Askeberd led the child ever downwards into the gloom of a deep valley, in a part of the country which is called Clent. Here between steeply rising hills, where the interposing boughs upon the wooded slopes wove a screen of secrecy, Askeberd planted the stick which straightway put forth leaf. Then kneeling down, in comely fashion, upon the moss, the child bared his white neck to the blow. As Askeberd stood hesitating, Kenelm bespake him with a voice of authority as befitteth the children of kings:—

"What thou hast to do, do quickly."

HEREUPON the other struck, the boy dying upon the stroke with the words *Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus*—the shining army of Martyrs glorifieth Thee—upon his lips. So died the holy child Kenelm with only Heaven for witness. But Heaven was witness. And Askeberd buried the body beneath a thorn tree, and Quendred ascended the throne of Mercia. The new Queen forbade any mention to be made of her brother Kenelm, by any person of what rank soever, under pain of death by the headsman.

WHAT that prodigious traitor sought to hide, the white cow of a poor widow revealed. For this fair creature would stray down from the public grazing ground upon the uplands, to that spot in the valley where Kenelm lay buried, nor would she suffer herself to be driven thence either by threats or blows. Here where was no grazing, she would abide the day through, but return unto the herd at eventide with her udder full. And some relate that a heavenly light shone above the boy's grave. And now befell the most prodigious miracle of all. Appearing none knew whence, in Old St. Peter's at Rome, a white dove let fall a scroll upon the altar whereon, in letters of gold, this distich was written:—

In Cowdale, Clent, with head offshorn,
Kenelm, King's son, lieth under a thorn.

Sorely troubled thereat, the Pope called for interpreters, when three lettered Englishmen who were present amidst the throng, rendered this verse into Latin; which was later versified for a memorial.

In Clent sub spina, jacet in valle bovina,
Vertice privatus, Kenelmus rege creatus.

THEN the Pope called unto him his Cardinals to debate this matter, and soon despatched his letters into England by the hand of his Legate, to the Kings thereof, and the Archbishops and the Bishops, bidding Wilfred Archbishop of Canterbury have Kenelm's body disinterred from that uncouth resting place and worthily buried. And now the Embassy has come to the Forest of Clent when following the white cow down from the uplands, they discovered the very spot where the murderer had sought to conceal the body. The searchers exhumed it and straightway a spring of living water gushed forth from the ground, by the drinking of which many that were sick were healed of their ills. . . .

And now with priests and choristers chanting, the procession was approaching Winchcomb, and — rumour having outstripped it—the multitude poured forth to meet it crying: "He is a Martyr truly: he is a Martyr of God!" And Quendred looked forth from an upper window and demanded to know the occasion of their rejoicing? Whereupon they told her. And now she heard the words of the psalm they were singing *Deus laudem meam*, and taking her own psalter, and reading the psalm in reverse, for

she had practice of witchcraft and hoped by this jugglery to bring a mischief upon those that were singing, she was struck by the divine displeasure, and her eyes fell from their sockets.

But it may be that this account has more of drama than truth in it, for some chroniclers term Quendred "Abbess", so that it seems probable that she assumed the habit of a nun, and spent the remainder of her life in expiation of the murder, pacing the cloister with her eyes intact. That faith cures were enacted at the shrine of our little Gloucestershire saint, does not admit of a doubt, and the words of the monastic reporters are as full of colour as their own stained glass windows. "*Caecus quidem a nativitate*"—one that had been blind from birth, upon approaching the shrine, beheld the Boy radiant in beauty take up his stand before him, holding in either hand a resplendent star. These he pressed into the blind man's eye-sockets who straightway recovering himself, saw all things clearly, marvelling at the unknown shapes of what he beheld, the fullness of the world, the splendour of light, and those other things which be in the world.

WINCHCOMB was now at the zenith of its prosperity. Its inns and taverns drove a thriving trade, for not only did they cater for and house the host of pilgrims who came to venerate St. Kenelm, but those also who were journeying farther to nearby Hailes Abbey. Centuries passed, and of the last Abbot but one, Richard Kydderminster of the reign of Henry VII, we read that he was "a learned man, and by his wise government, and encouragement of virtue and good letters, made the monastery flourish so much that it was like a little university". The Dissolution of the monasteries dealt Winchcomb a blow from which it never recovered. The famous Abbey was granted to Lord Seymour who carried out its destruction with such monumental thoroughness that he left no trace either of the church or the conventual buildings above the ground. That older Winchcomb still survives amongst the traditions of the countryside, translated from the realm of fact to that of folklore: a Golconda of the rustic imagination. The other day an old fellow informed me, "King Henry VIII destroyed Winchcomb when it was one of the foremost places in the world. He had the Abbey Church pulled down which was one, two, or three thousand years old".

> Waste lie the walls that were so good,
> And green grass grows where Troy Town stood.

Fairs were held and cloth was woven, but prosperity was not achieved.

But now Winchcomb enters upon the second phase of its notable and singular history when, from her Horn of Abundance, smiling Fortune proffers them neither fruit nor flowers but: a tobacco plant! Sir Walter Raleigh is believed to have lived for some time at Brockhampton, and tradition credits him with having planted in the fields about Winchcomb, the first tobacco to be grown on English soil, and with instructing the local farmers in the whole process of its production. The taking of it proved agreeable, and the Faculty perceived amongst its other beneficial effects, the expelling from the system of "fleame", "rheums", and "diseases ingendred in the longes and inward partes". No wonder Edmund Spenser refers to "divine tobacco" in his topical poem, the "Faerie Queene". Paul Hentzner, the German traveller to whose *Iterarium* we owe so much of our knowledge of Elizabethan social life—he visited Bartholomew Fair and had his pocket picked there—observes: "At bull-baiting, bear-whipping, and everywhere else, the English are constantly smoking the Nicotian weed, which in America is called 'Tobaca'." (How one could wish away that "bear-whipping": poor bears!)

TWO years later, the French ambassador describes the peers deliberating upon their verdict at the trial of Essex and Southampton, as smoking copiously. And in the

clouds of smoke thus rising heavenward, the men of Winchcomb fancied they perceived the golden towers of Eldorado. This new and truly astounding product of the soil flourished exceedingly, and Queen Elizabeth's government were not slow to clap upon the finished article a tax of "3d. the neat pound". Would the ancient opulence of St. Kenelm's Winchcomb return? The Queen died and a new monarch ascended the throne: King James, who ranked tobacco in the catalogue of his aversions as second only to witches. In his *A Counterblaste to Tabacco*, James casts ridicule upon Raleigh's colony of Virginia and of the Red Indians which the gallant knight is said to have brought back as souvenirs—"With the report of a great discovery and a conquest some two or three savage men were brought in, together with this savage custom" (smoking), "but the pity is the poor wild barbarous men died, but the vile barbarous custom is still alive, yea in fresh vigour, so as it seems a miracle to me how a custom springing from so vile a ground and brought in by a father" (promoter) "so generally hated" (wishful thinking; Raleigh was popular with all classes) "should be welcomed upon so slender a warrant." That any soul at Winchcomb troubled his head about the *Counterblaste* is exceedingly unlikely, but James was now to bring forward arguments more cogent.

Commissio pro Tabacco 17th October, 1604.

"We do therefore will and command you . . . to give order to all Customers, Controllers, Etc., that from and after the sixe and twentith day of October next comynge, they shall demande and take to our use of all Merchantes, as well English as Strangers, and of all others whoe shall bringe in anye Tabacco into the Realme, etc . . . the somme of six shillings and eighte pence uppon every Pound waighte thereof, over and above the custom of Twoo Pence uppon the Pounde Waighte usuallye paide heretofore."—There's no readier way to kill the sales of a commodity than by taxing it out of existence. But so far, the farmers of Winchcomb had nothing to complain of; the fewer their rivals, the greater their takings. But theirs was at best a Luke's little summer of prosperity, for their enemies wished the men of Winchcomb in another place which we associate with smoke. They argued, that the more tobacco produced at home, the less were the receipts of the Custom House officials upon the imported article.

That English trade suffered from the impoverishment of the Virginians who, unless they sold us their tobacco, were unable to buy our goods.

They urged the loss, slight but appreciable, to English shipowners and seamen engaged normally upon the "Virginia Voyage".

And it was the duty of an Imperially minded people to support the communities of their compatriots across the Ocean.

But, above all, the wealthy Virginia merchants were determined to wring from the British Government the monopoly of tobacco-growing, they having invested their money in tobacco to the practical exclusion of all other crops.

TRUE, to King James, tobacco was odious wherever it came from, and he endeavoured to persuade the rich Virginian speculators to keep silk-worms instead: how they must have smiled! However, the Colonists carried their point, and on 30th December, 1619—with the qualified and hesitant support of the College of Physicians who conceded that the imported tobacco was healthier than the English grown, a very debatable point—James issued the first of numerous proclamations, the net effect of which was that all tobacco plants throughout England were to be "utterlie destroyed". And the home-grown tobacco had been tended with such sterling skill, and at such expense of human sweat, and its reputation had spread far and wide by its merits alone. To tell those who had ploughed and sown that they should not reap, seemed a denial of the most elementary rights of the liberty of the subject. The more so as the English planters were even now reviving

Winchcomb and its fallen fortunes. It is no partial witness but a prosaic contributor to the *Calendar of State Papers* (Domestic) of 29th August, 1626, who refers to the "now famous town of Winchcomb". The reply of its citizens to King James's proclamation, was to ignore it.

Unlike his father, Charles I had no pseudo-moral prejudices against the "weed" and though he disliked smoking himself, he had no objection to others pleasing themselves in the matter. But the Virginia merchants amongst whom were many spirited young English emigrants, would be satisfied, so far as England was concerned, with nothing less than a complete monopoly of the trade; and they persuaded Charles to go a step further than James. Unless it were from an English colony, the importation of tobacco was now prohibited: to the profit of the smugglers whose "runs" of Spanish tobacco became increasingly frequent. The Gloucestrians may have felt apprehensive as to the future: but they went on tending their crops.

CROMWELL was to prove yet more inimical to the home tobacco trade than either James or Charles. He wished to secure the prosperity of the settlers of Virginia and Maryland for at heart he was a great Imperialist; and this is perhaps the best thing that can be said of him. But Gloucestershire was far from being as Puritan in its sympathies as some writers have chosen to represent it, and whilst promising the Virginians his support, the Protector dared not drive a considerable section of the Gloucestrians to despair. There are letters extant to Mr. Secretary Nicolas, Secretary to Charles II and then in exile with him, in which it is stated that one thousand four hundred men are ready in Bristol to march to his assistance within four days after his landing.* Charles was further promised that the gates of Gloucester would be thrown open by Royalist sympathizers, who were sure of the ready support of six hundred discontented tobacco planters in that neighbourhood.

But after Dunbar and Worcester, Cromwell found himself strong enough to act, and as with all dictators—Hitler and Stalin are contemporary examples—the services of the government spy—the *snooper* who will make a living by the betrayal of his fellows—were put under liberal contribution. An Act of 1652, states that whereas "divers great quantities of tobacco have been of late years and now are planted in divers parts of this nation, tending to the decay of husbandry and tillage, and the prejudice of the plantations abroad", from the following First of May, no one should "plant, set, grow, make or cure any tobacco in any field or place within this country, on pain of a fine of twenty shillings for every rod or pole so planted".—All this for a bare "pole" of thirty and one quarter square yards!—Of this sum, one-half was to go to the Government, and the other to the benefit of the informer. The Act gave power to any person to enter any ground planted with tobacco, "and grub, cut up, destroy, and utterly consume all and every such Tobaccos".

MUCH English tobacco *was* destroyed, and riots broke out in consequence, but they "durst not destroy any about Winchcomb" where the inhabitants were so spirited as to raise three hundred armed men, horse and foot, "to resist the uprooting of their crops". Protesting that "they were bred to the trade, and if they lose it they will lose their lives also", they bought up tobacco-plants, and swore that they would plant again for all that was destroyed. They gave out their intention of inducing the inhabitants of other places to join them in opposing their oppressors.

Mercurius Politicus. July, 1658.

"Cornet Wakefield with a party of horse marching out of Gloucester upon the last of July to Winchcomb and Cheltenham to destroy the tobacco plants in those parts, the country did rise against them in a great body to the number of 5 or 600, giving them very

* Latimer: *Annals of Bristol.*

reviling and threatening speeches, even to kill them horse and man, if that he and his men did come, inasmuch as that the tumult being so great, he was constrained to draw off and nothing was done."

From another account we learn that the Government posse was "thirty-six horse", and that although they went to Cheltenham early in the morning, they found an armed multitude there before them, guarding the tobacco field. The troop broke through the crowd and forced its way into Cheltenham where they found "no peace officer". It was unlikely they should, for the magistrates were of like mind with the planters, and in some cases derived their rents from them. No; there was no "peace officer" but there *was* "a rabble of men and women calling for blood for the tobacco" (which had already been uprooted) "so that had there been any action, blood would have been spilt". The soldiers "with cocked pistols", bade "the multitude disperse". The "multitude" however, stood firm; and now two hundred reinforcements arriving from Winchcomb, it was the soldiers who "dispersed": or at least retired.

IF only some compromise could have been hit upon! Unfortunately antagonism to Winchcomb's one thriving trade had by this time become a tradition with governments, and that of Charles II acted with as little regard to justice and humanity as had that of Cromwell.

Pepys Diary. 19th Sept., 1667:

"At noon home to dinner, W. Hewer and I and my wife, when comes my cozen, Kate Joyce, and an aunt of ours Lettice . . . and also Sarah Kite with her little boy in her arms, a very pretty little boy and could wish it were my own. My wife being all unready, did not appear. I made as much of them as I could such ordinary company; and yet my heart was glad to see them, though their condition was a little below my present state, to be familiar with." "She" (Sarah Kite) "tells how the life-guard, which we thought a little while since, was sent into the country about some insurrection, was sent to Winchcomb, to spoil the tobacco there, which it seems the people there do plant contrary to law, and have always done, and still have been under force and danger of having it spoiled, as it hath been oftentimes, and yet they will continue to plant it. The place, she says, is a miserable poor place."

How could it be otherwise?

But though modern Winchcomb is of less account in the world than formerly, her men display the same stubborn fortitude which distinguished their forebears. The little Church Museum still proudly displays the muster-roll of the Winchcomb Volunteers who, in 1803, put themselves into a posture of defence; for *Boney* was believed to be already plotting the invasion of England. Winchcomb men fought in India, the Crimea, South Africa, and in both World Wars, and although despoiled first of their monastery and then of their crops, so that they were twice rich and twice ruined, they have yet defended their homeland no whit less pertinaciously than did their ancestors their tobacco.

PRIOR: HIS CHARACTER AND GENIUS

By CHARLES RICHARD CAMMELL*

TO delight the reader by the most delicate expression of the most agreeable human feelings, never bewildering the imagination, over-taxing the intellect, nor harrowing the heart; always presenting, in cadences the most graceful, natural and melodious, the thoughts and sentiments which, at his happiest hours, are every man's: this was the singular province of Prior; a miraculous combination of genius and artistry, effected with such perfection of good taste, good nature and good humour, as to render the shrine that is his in the Pantheon of English poetry a place of no small distinction, one that invites a spiritual pilgrimage of peculiar affection.

In a letter* to the Rev. William Cawthorne Unwin, son of his beloved and immortal "Mary", the poet Cowper made some judicious remarks on the art which he practised so well. "Every man (he observes) conversant with verse-writing knows, and knows by painful experience, that the familiar style is of all styles the most difficult to succeed in. To make verse speak the language of prose, without being prosaic, to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake. He that could accomplish this task was Prior; many have imitated his excellence in this particular, but the best copies have fallen far short of the original."

* Dated 17th January, 1782.

ALWAYS chivalrous, Cowper was defending a poet, whom he loved, from what he felt to be Johnson's unjust criticism. Johnson's "Life of Prior"* is one of the worst of his biographies; his "Life of Gray" only is worse. Comparing these crude critiques of two of the most consummate artists in our poetic literature with the Doctor's masterly studies of Cowley, of Pope, and (above all) of Savage, who will not marvel that all were conceptions of the same powerful mind? Johnson freed himself seldom from political prejudice. Prior's Whig connections, for all his subsequent conversion and the troubles which it brought on him, doubtless blunted the edge of Johnson's judgment. Cowley's loyal service to the Stuarts, Pope's unfaltering Tory principles, opened his heart to the contemplation of their geniuses: Savage was his friend.

Thackeray later took up Johnson's challenge†: "Prior's seem to me amongst the easiest, the richest, the most charmingly humorous of English lyrical poems. Horace is always in his mind, and his song; and his philosophy, his good sense, his happy easy turns and melody, his loves, and his Epicureanism, bear a great resemblance to that most delightful and accomplished master." It would be pleasant to visualize an imaginary combat between those two burly champions, armed each with a gigantic folio, Johnson with his mighty Dictionary, Thackeray with

* In his *Lives of the English Poets.*

† In his *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century: Prior, Gay, and Pope*, 1853.

**Mr. Charles Richard Cammell is the author of "The Great Duke of Buckingham".*

Prior's prodigious volume of 1718, *Poems on Several Occasions.**

There is a pleasant tale of Matthew Prior's boyhood. He was born in Dorset in 1664.† His father (a joiner by trade, and a Dissenter) had moved to Westminster and placed his son at the famous school there, then presided over by the renowned Dr. Busby. Young Matthew was making remarkable progress in his classical studies, when his father's death caused an interruption in his education. His guardian, an uncle who was a vintner, removed him from school and employed him in the bar of his tavern, much frequented by the aristocratic litterati of the time, and among others by the famous Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, wit, warrior and poet, author of the still popular song "To all ye Ladies now at land".

One day, there was debate among the wits about the reading of certain lines of Horace. Someone observed that "he was mistaken if there was not a young fellow in the house who was able to set them all right".‡ Matthew was summoned, and so impressed was Dorset by the lad's elucidation of the passage in dispute, that he persuaded the vintner to send him back to Westminster; His Lordship defraying part of the expenses, till Prior became a King's Scholar.

WHAT a noble company are the poets of Westminster! No other of our great public schools, not even Eton, rich as she is in illustrious bards, can boast such a Pleiades of genius as Westminster: Herbert, Carew, Cowley, Dryden, Prior, Cowper, Southey: their names verily sing in our hearts, And a mystic chain of pride in the school that trained them seems to bind them one to other: Cowley venerated Herbert; his elegy on his friend Crashaw, who was Herbert's disciple, is immortal. "His authority is almost sacred to me," wrote Dryden of Cowley. Cowper's affectionate championship of his master, Prior, we have already cited. Southey's finest poems, those ballads and short pieces which Landor loved, breathe the influence both of Dryden and Cowper. Cowley, Carew and Dryden, all have their echoes in Prior.

Professor Courthope observed how Prior's panegyrical odes were "modelled on the example of Cowley. There is, indeed, little of the vigour and abundance, which elevate the best passages of Cowley", but "If Prior does not reach Cowley's excellencies, he avoids his faults. The structure of his Odes is simple and regular; an intelligible thought is expressed in each stanza, and is worked up to a set climax; there is no straining after far-fetched conceits . . . In all directions lyrical fancy gives place to epigrammatic point".*

But lyrical fancy had full flight in those familiar masterpieces which are Prior's peculiar passport to immortality. And here, too, Cowley (as much as Waller or Suckling) was his forerunner. Prior might not emulate Cowley's loftier poetic raptures, nor his profounder meditations; but he availed himself lavishly of all that is most graceful and charming in *The Mistress*, and in that incomparable odelet from Catullus, *Acme and Septimius*.† Of Dryden the influence on Prior was of another kind.

DRYDEN presented to Prior a metrical and linguistic model, the superiority of which his good taste did not fail to perceive. But if he owed Dryden a debt, it was no larger than the author of *Alexander's Feast* owed to Cowley and Waller, or (on their own admissions) Waller owed to Fairfax, and both Milton and Cowley to Spenser.‡ Pope himself, that great master of all that in poetry is excellent, was more in debt to Dryden, and more to Prior, than ever was

* It was Osborne the bookseller that Johnson "knocked down with a folio".

† Prior was born at or near Wimborne Minster, East Dorset, 21st July, 1664.

‡ *Life of Prior* by T. Evans, p. ix: Prior's *Poetical Works*, 1779: Vol. I.

*W. J. Courthope: *A History of English Poetry*: London, 1911. Vol. V. Chap. II, pp. 27-28. For Prior see also *ibid.* Chap. V. pp. 108-121.

† Cowley: *Verses on several occasions.*

‡ Dryden: *Preface to the Fables.* Cowley: Essay, *Of Himself.*

Prior to any poet. Orginality is often overstressed as a quality in literature and the arts: not infrequently is disregard of precedent the prime cause of an artist's or writer's worst faults. But Prior's originality is so natural and unconscious that we only perceive it when we have exhausted all comparisons with his peers.

Prior's return to Westminster School was the first step on the ladder which led him to fame and fortune. There he became the friend of Charles Montague, afterwards the celebrated Earl of Halifax, and of his brother James. Prior followed the Montagues to Trinity, Cambridge; thence he passed into diplomacy, a vocation to which he was singularly suited, and in which he attained to the highest eminence.

After filling with distinction the rôle of Secretary in the negotiations for the Treaty of Ryswick, 1697, and the Partition Treaty, in Paris 1698; he turned for a while to politics at home; was appointed Commissioner of Trade and Plantations, as successor to the philosopher Locke in 1700; and became M.P. for Grinstead in 1701.

ALL this while the poet was a staunch Whig, and a glowing panegyrist of King William III: notably in his stately *Carmen Seculare*, 1700. The finest of all his political poems is the rousing, satiric ballad paraphrasing Boileau-Despréaux's *Ode sur la prise de Namur*: at Boileau he had another tilt in his witty poetic *Letter* to the French literary dictator, *occasioned by the Victory at Blenheim*, 1704. About 1701, however, Prior made a political *volte face*. His swing over from Whig to Tory has never been satisfactorily explained; but henceforth he was in alliance with Harley and Bolingbroke. When the Tories took office in 1710 he returned to diplomacy; in 1711 he was employed upon the Treaty of Utrecht, and in due course he became Ambassador Plenipotentiary in Paris. No better man for the post was ever chosen; his tact, good humour, and intimate knowledge of the French language made him an ideal ambassador.

But Queen Anne's death in 1714 was the end of Prior's public life. The Whigs did not forget his desertion. He was impeached in 1715, and imprisoned in the Tower. During his detention he never lost his philosophic calm or good humour, passing the time with the composition of his merry masterpiece *Alma*. It was not for nothing that he had steeped his mind in Horace and Saint-Evremond.

LIBERATED at the close of 1717, Prior had no employment and little money. Pope suggested that he should publish a sumptuous edition of his Poems by subscription. The scheme proved an enormous success. The huge folio of 1718 contains a prodigious list of subscribers, among them an Archbishop, sixteen Dukes and ten Duchesses, with Marquesses, Earls, Barons, Knights and landed gentry in profusion. Prior made £4,000, a large sum in those days, perhaps equivalent to £40,000 to-day. He lived comfortably till his death in 1721. He was buried with his peers in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.

Solomon on the Vanity of the World: A Poem in Three Books, was Prior's most ambitious contribution to literature; but *Alma: or the Progress of the Mind: in Three Cantos*, is indubitably the best of his long poetical works. Nothing in verse can be more delightful to read than this Hudibrastic poem in dialogue. From its airy start:

"Matthew met Richard; when or where
From story is not mighty clear:
Of many knotty points they spoke;
And *pro* and *con* by turns they took.
Rats half the manuscript have eat:
Dire hunger; which we all regret.

. . . . . .

"Alma, in verse; in prose, the Mind,
By Aristotle's pen defin'd,
Throughout the body squat or tall,
Is *bona fide*, All in All.
And yet, slap dash, is All again
In every sinew, nerve and vein:

Runs here and there, like Hamlet's
Ghost;
While everywhere she rules the roast."

So the poem runs on through a variety of serio-comical arguments and counter-arguments to its flippant, worldly-wise close:

"For Plato's fancies what care I?

* * *

"E'en let him of Ideas speak
To Heathens in his native Greek.
If to be sad is to be wise;
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully writ, or Wanley read."

Warton says that "it was his *Solomon* on which Prior chiefly valued himself", and tells a story of Prior asking Pope how he liked the poem, and of Pope replying: "Your *Alma* is a masterpiece." "What (said Prior petulantly) do you tell me of my *Alma*—a loose and hasty scribble, to relieve the hours of my imprisonment." Later, Prior put this implied depreciation of his favourite, *Solomon*, into satiric verse:

"Indeed, poor Solomon in rhyme
Was much too grave to be sublime."*

Prior "took the idea of *Alma* from a Spanish writer". From that hint he created a *chef-d'œuvre*. Warton aptly describes this brilliant performance as "an original work and perhaps the very best of all his compositions, which abounds equally in wit, pleasantry, humour, and good sense, and is a perfect pattern of facility of versification".†

VOLTAIRE seems to have taken *Alma* more seriously than its author did: "This History of the Soul, of Prior's, is the most natural account of that Being, so much felt, and so little known . . . Perhaps this work is too long; all pleasantry should be short, and even the serious should be short too"‡—a curious critique from the voluminous Voltaire!

But *Solomon*, for all its gravity, its length, and whether or not it misses the sublime, is a poem where many of the higher poetic qualities are found: its style is stately, its cadence melodious; it contains memorable lines. Though the thoughts are Solomon's (expanded by Prior), much of the poem is evidently "written with emotion",* as, for example, the noble conclusion, which would tell us, if we did not know it, that Voltaire read and admired Prior. †

"Supreme, all-wise, eternal Potentate!
Sole author, sole disposer of our fate!
Enthron'd in Light, and Immortality,
Whom no man fully sees, and none can see!
Original of Beings! Pow'r Divine!
Since that I live, and that I think, is Thine;
Benign Creator, let Thy plastic hand
Dispose its own effect. Let Thy command
Restore, great Father, Thy instructed son;
And in my act may Thy great *Will Be Done*."

CRITICS have censured Prior for choosing the grand old ballad *The Nut-Brown Maid* for the theme of his pastoral poem *Henry and Emma*. But Prior attempted no paraphrase. He has made a new poem on an old tale, and judged on its merits, it reveals many beauties. But the poem itself is less important than its influence. Savage told Johnson that it was "from his perusal of Prior's *Nut-Brown Maid*" that "Pope's first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose". Thus Prior sowed the seed whence sprang *Eloisa to Abelard*, a poem which every judicious critic has exalted, and of which Lord Byron could proclaim: "All that we have of ancient, all that we have of modern poetry, sinks into nothing compared with him (Pope) in this production."

* Prior: *The Conversation.*

† Warton: *History of English Poetry.* Cited by Elwin & Courthope: *Pope's Works:* Vol. X, p. 330.

‡ Voltaire: *Lettres Philosophiques.*

* Courthope: *Hist. Eng. Poetry:* Vol. V, Ch. V, p. 112.

† Compare Voltaire's noblest poems: *Sur la Loi Naturelle*, and *Sur le Désastre de Lisbonne.*

Turning Prior's pages, and pausing to savour the delicacy of his shorter pieces—his songs, ballads and elegies, we experience a sensation akin to that which a butterfly might be expected to feel, flitting from flower to flower, sipping from fragrant calices the nectars and honey-dews.

What can be more delectible than the poem on Cupid, despoiled of his bow and quiver by Cloe's wiles:

"The God disarm'd, e'er since that day
Passes his life in harmless play;
Flies round, or sits upon her breast,
A little, flutt'ring, idle guest."*

Or that inimitable piece wherein Ganymede persuades Cupid to play dice, and tricks him of all his possessions—fantastic trifles, like

"A snuff-box set with bleeding hearts,
Rubies all pierced with diamond darts."

and still more precious:

"Two table-books in shagreen covers,
Fill'd with good verse from real lovers,
Merchandise rare! A billet-doux,
Its matter passionate, yet true."†

He could show feeling, too, after his fashion; as in this little paraphrase of Plato, entitled *The Lady who offers her Looking Glass to Venus:*

"Venus, take my Votive Glass:
Since I am not what I was;
What from this day I shall be,
Venus, let me never see."

PERHAPS of Prior's *erotica*, perhaps of all these priceless *Tanagras* and *intaglios* of verse, the most exquisite is *The Dove*, a poem which, in its perfection of playfulness and melody, in its matchless union of delicacy and naughtiness, has no peer in English, and no superior even in French. That Austin Dobson, than whom none has had more sympathy with Prior's mind, or has written better upon him, should have omitted *The Dove* from his charming edition,‡ proves nothing but the invincible prudery of the Victorian tradition.

It were idle to enquire who were the originals of Prior's immortal Cloe and Lisetta. Doubtless they changed shape like Proteus and colour like chameleons. Here were no Lauras, no Stellas. Cloe is as various as Cowley's nameless "Mistress"; but, whatever her metamorphosis, she never took the form of a fine lady like the Sacharrissa of Waller.

Something, indeed, we know of Prior's amatory affections. His passions were Plebeian; which was accounted rather shocking; for though it was a time when morals there were none, great men were expected to make love to grand ladies. Nothing short of a Countess or a Maid-of-Honour was fit for the philanderings of a famous poet and distinguished diplomat.

BUT Prior thought otherwise, if he thought at all about what people were thinking of him. His Excellency went on love-making where he pleased, seeing Cloe in a tavern-wench, ever prettier, as the bottles went round. Pope might rhyme:

"Tis known a cook-maid roasted Prior;"

and prime Spence with reminiscences: how Prior used "to bury himself for days and nights with a poor mean creature, and often drink hard":* but Prior knew there was sense in Sir John Suckling's observation (though the rhyme was poor):

"for this each wise man knows,
As goodstuff under flannel lies, as under
silken clothes".†

And was not Prior once a vintner's lad? And is not the tavern a microcosm of the great world? Assuredly Prior was a good fellow in or out of his cups; a man and a poet whom Horace would have welcomed at his Sabine farm, and Omar and Háfiz in their Persian gardens.

Prior—his life, his poetry, his character—has been seriously compared with Chaucer.

* Prior: *Love Disarm'd.*

† Prior: *Cupid and Ganymede.*

‡ *Selected Poems of Matthew Prior:* With an Introduction and Notes by Austin Dobson, London. 1889. 12mo. Printed at the Chiswick Press.

* Pope's *Works:* Elwin & Courthope: Vol. VI, p, 64 and note.

† Suckling: *Poems, Plays, etc.*, edited by W. Carew Hazlitt, London. 1892. Vol. I, pp. 51-52.

"Prior (says Professor Minto) had very much the same easy pleasure-loving disposition as Chaucer, combined with a similar capacity for solid work." Chaucer's father and Prior's guardian were vintners in London; both poets held office as Controllers at home and Ambassadors abroad; sense, humour, fancy, good taste, music, and striking originality, are the characteristic qualities of the poetry of both.

With the French poet Saint-Amant there is another parallel. He, too, was a lover of wine and women and good talk; a diplomat, a companion of princes and prelates; the author of panegyrics and satires and of a great poem on a sacred theme;* yet he, too, lives in the hearts of men supremely as a singer of sweet melodies, erotic and Bacchanalian. In the stout roistering Frenchman of an earlier generation you will look in vain for Prior's delicacy of touch and tact: spades for him were spades. But for all his rudeness (and he was rudest of all in his ruthless satire on our country, *Albion*†), there is a strange likeness between Saint-Amant and Prior: good sense, enjoyment of good things, scorn of pretention, and pride in the fashioning of lovely verse.

COWPER noted that, up to his time, Prior had no poetical successor. He has had but one since: Ireland's immortal bard, Thomas Moore. Prior lived in an unromantic, Moore in a romantic age. With this difference, the geniuses of the two are curiously akin: the same common sense, the same genial humour and racy wit, the same zest for friendship, good-fellowship, and conviviality, the same playful eroticism, and delicate fancy, the same natural, yet artful expression, lucid diction, exquisite versification, faultless melody: even Moore's unique tenderness finds here and there a counterpart in the sophisticated Prior.

For of all Prior's poetic legacy, rich as it is, like the odes of Háfiz, with "orient pearls at random strung", the most endeared to later generations are the poems where tenderness creeps in furthest — his poems to children. Swinburne described the stanzas *To a Child of Quality* as "the most adorable of nursery idyls that ever was or will be in our language"; and Dobson styles this poem "the crown of Prior's achievement".*

NO less perfect is *A Letter to the Honourable Lady Margaret Cavendish Holles-Harley, when a Child:* "My noble, lovely, little Peggy." At once a prayer, and a benediction, these verses conferred immortality upon the future Duchess of Portland, to whom they were addressed.

Recently the present writer found inscribed by hand in an old copy of Prior the following lines, which epitomize the character of his mind and genius more concisely than much prose. They are entitled simply, *Reading Prior's Poems:*

"Gay trifler! Wise philosopher!
Your verses glide like sunny streams,
And brightly sparkling, lightly stir
The tired heart to healing dreams.

"Ambassador and Bard of sense!
You steal the soul away, not far—
Just off dull earth; but stealing hence,
She finds more peace than in a star."

* *Moyse Sauvé: Idyle Heroique:* See *Oeuvres Complètes de Saint-Amant:* Paris: Bibliotheque Elzevirienne, 1855. Tome II, pp. 137-334.

† *L'Albion: caprice herōi-comique:* ibid. Tome II, pp. 435-471.

* See Introduction to Dobson's edition of *Selected Poems* of Prior.

HOW WE GOT THE PRESENT-DAY FOXHOUND

By GUY PAGET*

MANY people, who have never hunted themselves, have felt a peculiar thrill, on hearing hounds in full cry, or even when impeded on their lawful occasions by meeting a pack on the road.

They may therefore take some interest in a short account of the ancestry of the beautiful creatures, which somehow seem to touch some hidden nerve in all except the very highbrow.

From the dawn of time all the world over, man has bred dogs to help him hunt, but has he ever bred one which could run down in fair chase a full grown wolf? The Russian Borzoi can't if the wolf has time to void himself.

If one is to judge by the present-day show Irish wolf-hound, I would put my money on a fox to outpace him, and I doubt if he would tackle a badger, if unlucky enough to catch one in the open; yet the wild red dogs of India, no bigger than a harrier, will run down an eland and have been known to kill a tiger.

TO-DAY hounds are still divided into two classes, the running and the hunting dogs. In the first, we have the greyhound and whippet, and in the second the foxhound, the harrier, the beagle and the basset; the working stag, otter, elk and boar-hound for all practical purposes have been ousted by foxhound crosses.

What is the orgin of the foxhound? I suppose, if we are Darwinians, we would say they shared a common ancestor with the wolf and fox, both of whom can and occasionally do interbreed with the dog, and the progeny is fertile.

Pictures of hunting dogs are found in the cave dwellings of Spain, the tombs of Egypt and Assyria, and on the vases of Etruria. Cæsar imported hunting dogs from Britain to Rome in B.C. 55.

But let us come to more modern times, when hunting was well organized. In 1400, Richard, Duke of York, translated and added to Gaston de Foix's classic "The Master of Game", and caused it to be illustrated with exquisite illuminations, which show seven or eight distinct breeds of hounds. There seem to have been no attempt to breed a dual purpose hound, which could both run and hunt, for they used both after most game at the same time. The various kinds of Alaintes or hunting dogs differ distinctly according to whether they hunted hart, buck, otter, fox, or hare. The wolf-hounds look as if they might have been first cousins to their quarry and were smooth as well as rough. The boar hounds were very like the mastiffs of yesterday and were assisted by the largest Alaintes.

If the pictures are true, they were an ugly, long backed, herring-gutted lot and the greyhounds an undersized, weedy, wasp-waisted collection. The limer, or tufter who, by the way, received thirty-three per cent more than the whipper-in for his keep, is generally shown to be of the mastiff type. The Alaintes were very short-faced, heavy-jowled, and in contrast, the hunting dogs had very snipey noses.

For the next three hundred years, we have no reliable pictures of hounds.

In the "Boke of St. Alban" (1500), the first hunting book to be printed in English, the wood cuts are too crude to give any true idea, nor can we judge by the occasional dogs

* *Major Guy Paget is the author of "The History of the Althorp and Pytchley Hunt".*

in the pictures of Vandyck and his followers. We have to wait for the pictures of Wootton (168?-1765), Seymour (1700-1750), and John Sartorius (1700-1779) in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Their hounds are generally small and white, with black and tan markings, more often black than tan. They appear to have been about twenty-two inches, judging from the horses, and very light of bone. In 1635, a century before, however, they were thought worthy of kings; for Charles I's ambassador in Paris begged of Lord Sunderland for a couple of unentered hounds as a gift for King Louis. This was one hundred years before the Althorp and Pytchley Hunts were amalgamated by the first Earl Spencer, second son of the Earl of Sunderland, 1763.

DURING the eighteenth century there were two quite distinct breeds of dogs used for hunting foxes: the foxhound of Wootton and the southern hound, built on the lines of the present-day show bloodhound. These may have been the descendants of the St. Hubert breed, imported from Gascony by Sir Bernard Brocas, Hereditary Master of the Royal Hunt in the reign of Richard II. The oldest known foxhound stud books are the Carlton, 1721; the Cottesmore (Mr. Noel's), 1732; Mr. Darley of Yorkshire, 1748 (he sold his hounds in 1763 to the first Lord Spencer when he added the Pytchley Hunt country to his own); and the second volume of the Fitzwilliam, 1775, the first one being burnt in a fire at the kennels.

Of these packs, only the Fitzwilliam remain in unbroken succession. The others have been scattered time and again by change of mastership. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century and after, it was the custom in most countries for the hounds to belong to the Master, the same as the hunt horses do to-day. This worked all right, where the hunts were hereditary or the mastership remained between two or three great local families, as in the case of Bramham Moor to-day. There are now only five hereditary packs with two hundred years of unbroken succession: the Dukes of Beaufort (Badminton), Rutland (Belvoir), and the Earls (late) of Berkeley, Fitzwilliam (Milton), and Yarborough (Brocklesby). The Belvoir, Brocklesby and Milton countries are chiefly flat, heavy plough; the Belvoir have only one day a week all grass. The Badminton and Berkeley are more varied, but the majority of the Duke's is plough, and I must confess I know nothing of the Berkeley country, except that it used to stretch from Charing Cross to Berkeley Castle near Bristol, and is reputed to have had kennels at both these places as well as at Ascot and Heythrop. Up to a short time ago, the Berkeley were famous for peculiar chocolate markings. This, I am told, has now completely died out, as it has in the case of the Pytchley, whose present pack is founded on Mr. Grantley Berkeley's hounds, given him by his brother to hunt the Oakley country and sold to Mr. Payne of Sulby in 1835, who gave them to the Pytchley country in 1848. (See *History of Althorp and Pytchley Hunt*, Collins and Collins, 1937.)

ONE effect of hereditary Mastership is that the Masters are generally middle-aged before they take over and often succeed to old huntsmen set in their ways. Alas, as one grows older, the love of speed decreases and as the years pass the noble masters are apt to think their hounds went quite as fast as necessary and so concentrated on looks. Gradually they saw more of their hounds in the kennel than in the field, so had to take the huntsman's word for the hunting abilities of any particular hound.

The Brocklesby, Belvoir and Milton countries almost touch along the road to London, so that the noble masters knew each other well, and no doubt often visited each other's kennels. During the minority of the fourth Duke of Rutland, his uncle the Duke of Beaufort was his guardian, and his cousin Lord Forester, a far neighbour of Lord Berkeley, acted as master of the hounds.

It is therefore not surprising, since they all hunted countries which required strong rather than quick hounds, that they went for the same type and used each other's blood extensively.

It may interest the reader to know that of all associations of animal breeders, the Masters of Hounds alone never charge each other stud fees, bar a guinea tip to the huntsman.

As late as 1825, there was no uniformity in size, shape or marking.

OUR chief witness is Ben Marshall, the artist. He started under Abbot, R.A., as a portrait painter and largely remained so all his life. That he was truthful, we can infer by the way he resisted the bribes of the cattle breeders to produce caricatures of animals in order to boost their wares. In 1821, Lord Sondes of Rockingham Castle agreed to hunt the old Pytchley Hunt Club country. He engaged Marshall to paint him and his brothers amongst the hounds he had got together. No one could call them a pack by any stretch of imagination—all shapes, sizes and colour, and all sitting for their portrait, for it was Marshall's habit, when engaged on a big hunting picture, to do each couple on a separate panel and then try and fit them into a kind of jig-saw puzzle, with the result that these pictures are more pleasing to an artist than a sportsman. We must accept this picture as true, since it still occupies its place of honour at Rockingham, but one stands astounded before the effrontery that could offer such a "*goulache da hund*" and the ignorance of a master who could swallow it.

John Ferneley is another reliable witness, for you can recognize whether a picture by him is of the Belvoir, Quorn or Cottesmore hounds without being told.

Up to 1914 there was a certain family likeness within most established packs, which does not exist to-day, except in the dales and Welsh packs, and the pure Welsh are fast disappearing. It is curious that this individuality lasted as long as it did.

BY the middle of the last century a fairly uniform foxhound had been produced, a very beautiful animal about twenty-six to twenty-eight at the shoulder and weighing about twenty-one pounds more than Osbaldiston's Furrier (181?). The Squire, much to the huntsman's regret, got Furrier from Belvoir, as he was not quite straight, so the Duke not only lost the best fox-killer of his generation, but the ancestor of nearly every foxhound in England! The craze for straightness has already begun its fell work. About 1860 Hound Shows began and the then Belvoir or Family type was naturally selected as the standard not only in shape but in colour. Unless it was Belvoir tan no hound was looked at. Then came the craze of bone, the straightness and cat feet. All excellent in reason, but who ever saw a runner, man or beast, with thick legs, or heard of a dog breaking its leg because it was too thin! There is no objection to a straight front, but there are far more important points, not so easy to spot. Any novice can see a round foot but it's not so simple to spot if it is put on right, nor if the straight leg is slung from a straight shoulder or not. The Chinese admired round feet in their women but not for speed!

Before I go further let me say it first: I have never bred a foxhound, I have never been asked to judge one, and I am not the only person, who has ever been out hunting and/or watched hounds. I am only putting down facts, as I have observed them during half a century, for I was blooded in 1894 by Tom Firr at Barkby Holt, and killed a Leicestershire fox in 1944, in the open, hunting a pack of hounds, not one of which knew me by sight, nor I the names of more than half a dozen of them.

I HAVE hunted with more than fifty packs and seen many more, from Stirling to Somerset and Cardiff to Canterbury. I even for one season took the advice which Bill Selby-Lowndes once gave to a member of his field, and hunted "jackals round the walls of

Jerusalem on a jackass". To be strictly accurate read "Jaffa on a mule".

The show mania spread by 1900 and nearly every master had become infected. It was only in the west and north that there was any real resistance. In Cumberland and the Yorkshire dales they continued to try their hounds out on trials over mountains, where both stoutness and nose were the essentials and handsome is as handsome does.

By 1910, Peterborough had almost done to the foxhound, what Crufts had to the bulldog, the St. Bernard, the terrier and the collie; by the exaggeration of non-essential points, rendering them useless for their hereditary trade.

Hounds' shoulders were so in their necks, that they could hardly get their noses to the ground. Their feet were becoming not cat but clubbed, so exaggerated had the *stance* become, that it was thought right for them to stand on two toes only. With their added weight the least mishap and down came these toes, turning a second season dog into a crippled stallion. Some Masters kept their best hounds for showing only, and bred from mute, skirting and non-hunting hounds, if only they were "plumb straight and Belvoir tan". There is some conceivable reason for a hound to be white, for it is more easily seen, but none for its being dark. Unless it was almost black and tan it was waste of a railway fare to send it to Peterborough.

THERE is a story told of a Master of the Grafton, who kept a prize puppy on for a second season, which would not enter (hunt).

The Master, who, had given it the prize, asked if he might send a bitch to it. He was told "No" and the sad truth. He then offered to buy the brute. The Grafton Master wrote back, that it was dead! He had had it put down, rather than risk its blood corrupting the Foxhound Stud Book.

The Dowager Lady Bute offered to bet Algy Burnaby, that she would kill more foxes in his country in a week with her Welshmen than he would in her country with the Quorn hounds: and no takers!

Mr. Wroughton, who was Master of the Pytchley from 1894 to 1902, won many prizes at Peterborough. He was a first-class horseman but no thruster, though a thorough sportsman in every way up to the very end. He broke his neck trying a horse in the Belvoir Vale, when he was eighty. His huntsman was "John" Isaac, the famous "Galloping Whip" was never half as good a huntsman as he was a whipper-in.

About this time, Colonel Lort Philip sent up a Welsh bred bitch called Dimple to Brixworth, to see if she was really as good as she seemed at home. After a month's trial Harry Bentley, the Pytchley poet, wrote a saga recording, how be it fair and foul, grass or woodland Dimple out-ran, out-stayed and out-nosed the local Pytchley Peterborough champions.

Even after Lord Annaly had succeeded Mr. Wroughton at Brixworth in 1902, the young bloods continued to complain about the pace, so on the recommendation of The Squire, Annaly engaged a young man who had only carried the horn with a small north country pack for two seasons. Mr. (Viscount) Henry Chaplin had spotted him while whipping-in at Belvoir.

THIS was Frank Freeman. He instantly saw what was wrong. The hounds were unsuited to the country, which was all grass and divided by fences no dog and few horses can jump. What were wanted were small quick hounds, which could slip through the bullfinches (thorn fences) and in and out of the deep bottoms.

He persuaded Lord Annaly to part with some of Isaac's old favourite big dog hounds. Long and loud was the cry of the old stagers. Only to be exceeded in the autumn, "that there would not be a fox in the country as the new man was killing, not only the cubs, but all the old'uns, many of which were well known by sight, having eluded John Isaac for years.

It would have gone ill with Frank, if he had struck a bad scenting season, but fortune favoured the brave and there were two hundred and six noses on the kennel door before May day came. Freeman only once exceeded this number, but there was never a surfeit of old foxes again nor as time went on did they become easier to kill; more stock in the fields, more artificial manure, and the ever growing menace of wire.

Mr. (Sir) Edward Curr was another Non-conformist. He bred a white pack on the borders of Wales, and, of course, there were others who ignored Peterbrough. Gradually during the last forty years, it began to dawn on the rising generation, that all was not well in the Kingdom of the Hound, and that there might be something in the theory, that all countries were not suitable for the Peterborough hound, and, in fact, if they went on *improving* them at the same rate, no country would be.

THE battle was neither short nor easy. Freeman, backed by his masters, Sir Charles and then his brother, Colonel John Lowther, followed on in his silent dogged way for twenty-five seasons, showing the best of sport and killing foxes on bad scenting days almost as often as on good, while his rivals pleaded bad scent to explain their lack of success and "accidents" for the unsoundness of their hounds. One heard less of the Pytchley "harriers" and more of Freeman's Flying Bitches. New M.F.H's who inherited short necks and bad shoulders, looked about for the antidote and found it at Brixworth or beyond the Pale in Wales and the North.

Some masters used pure-bred Welsh, but dared not breed from the results for however good fox-killers they might be, they were bastards and so could never be admitted within the sacred portals of the Foxhound Stud Book.

To-day things are better. Peterborough has lost much of its prestige. You hear: "She won at Peterborough last year *but* she is a real good worker." The colour bar is down. Last year, 1948, more than half the prize winners were Badger Pie or yellow and white, far from Belvoir tan. All were seven pounds or more lighter than the old show dogs of yester years. The Peterborough Stance had departed and is now definitely treated as unsoundness. This was due to such men as the Duke of Beaufort, Maurice Berkeley, "Ikey" Bell, Colonel M. Borwick, and a few others, who, though ardent supporters of Dog Shows, kept their hunting sanity.

Freeman was dead just a year. An almost white Pytchley bitch by a Beaufort dog won the 1948 championship and the couples with another yellow and white bitch. They were bigger than Freeman liked, but built on the lines he so staunchly believed in. At the same show, the Tynedale Enter-dogs, just the type Freeman loved, were placed second to a great big couple from Babminton, four or five inches taller and twice their weight.

Peterborough had admitted "Hound for a country."

Surely the wheel has turned full circle.

Short Story

THE WREN

By E. La MOTHE STOWELL

"We'll hunt the wren," says Robin the Bobbin,
"We'll hunt the wren," says every one.
(Manx traditional song.)

THE story of the sad end of poor Reggie Pedlow has not, to my knowledge, been told before, and I am doubtful whether I should tell it now. But time passes, and it deserves to be put on record, if only to confound those blinkered millions who accept as real nothing which cannot be weighed and measured by the apparatus of the laboratory; it affords evidence that forces exist, imperceptible to science but recognized by our less cocksure ancestors, which are capable of interacting with the physical world and on occasion of directing the course of events.

I had known Pedlow from Cambridge days when we were both up at the same college together. We had much in common and, though after practising at the Bar he entered the colonial service in a legal capacity and went abroad, while I, influenced by Frazer's "Golden Bough", devoted myself to anthropology, we kept in touch. My researches took me abroad also at times, but there were periods when we were able to be on leave together in England. I would then enjoy meeting again the tall rather gaunt figure of my old friend, with his grave smile, and embarrassing limp. This last was occasioned by a congenital deformity of his right foot, *tallipes equinus*, which forced him to walk as it were on the toes of that foot. The infirmity, I discovered, had been regarded as a mark of royalty in certain primitive societies, and we thereafter occasionally referred to it facetiously as his "royal limp".

THE time came when he was free to take his pension and retire. He had become an enthusiastic supporter of a society known as "Men of the Trees", possibly as a result of having spent so many years in a quarter of the globe where shrubs and grasses flourished fitfully for brief seasons, and the hillsides knew no other crop than stones and boulders. It was not surprising, therefore, that despite the rigours of an English winter, he was determined to settle among green fields and leafy woods in the British Isles, and that he finally decided to look for a house in the Isle of Man, observing that it was less over-governed than the United Kingdom and more beautiful than most districts on the mainland.

Curiously enough it never seems to have occurred to Pedlow, who, though born and brought up in England was of almost wholly Manx ancestry, that his decision to reside in the Island might have been no less preordained than that of the salmon, which in its latter years returns to the upper reaches of its natal river. And whereas house-hunting is for most of us a wearisome and protracted operation, he, as if under some no less certain guidance, found himself within a few days facing a house which he instantly perceived conformed ideally with his requirements.

THE house lay at the entrance to a narrow valley, known locally like most such valleys as a glen, and running between steep hills into the central massif. It was well sited on rising ground which in prehistoric times must have stood out like an island in swampy and overgrown surroundings. Now, a pleasant stream divided it from the main road, and of trees it was blessed with a great

variety. A belt of them, encircling it like a private bodyguard provided shelter from the Island's constant and changing winds, and secluded all but tall chimneys and an occasional gable from the vulgar gaze. An avenue of limes with branches meeting like crossed swords overhead presented the visitor who approached on foot with a guard of honour by day, but a dark and rather sinister tunnel after dark; for between the trees were ornamental shrubs, and behind the bushes were unsteady shadows, and the sounds of uncertain movements which ceased almost as abruptly as they began.

The house within living memory had changed hands a good many times and owned association with no long-established family. In the words of one of the villagers, "They comes and they goes". The last occupants, three spinster sisters, had departed when their income, derived from coalmining and railway investments, had been reduced by nationalization. Their predecessor, who in his cups had been wont to chase his wife round the house in her nightgown, had abbreviated his own life by his potations; and before his occupation exiles returned from the antipodes, had after a few years been overcome with the longing to return to them. And so it was that by chance—but what is chance?—when Reggie Pedlow appeared, the house was offered with immediate possession.

He was a believer in what he termed "the atmosphere" of a house, and declared in his first letter to me from his new address that, on stepping into this one, he received the impression that it "had been waiting for me".

"I felt," he wrote, "as though it accepted me, and as though many of the views and glimpses from fields and garden were old friends."

OF course, like all new householders, he saw many ways in which the building could be improved, and like most he found that almost all were unnecessary, if not impossible. But one alteration he did make, and with the unanimous approval of his female advisers. Stone flags formed the floor of the kitchen. This room, they pointed out, was the power house of the establishment, and for the modern cook, when she could be caught, flags were too cold, damp and hard to be endured. If they did not go, she certainly would.

A builder was consequently engaged to remove the old floor and substitute a new one of wood. The workmen who appeared to carry out the first part of the operation were, even to Pedlow's untrained eye, well fitted for their task; in the matter of muscle "they had what it takes"—until they reached an unusually long flag in the centre of the floor, when it seemed that they hadn't. But this flag, after considerable excavation all round it, did not, it was found, properly correspond to the description of a flag. It had the normal breadth and surface, but was of quite unusual length, and exceeded beyond all reason the recognized thickness of one or two inches. Instead, it was discovered to be over half a foot thick, to be in fact, a massive slab of rock. Special tackle and extra hands had to be called in to shift it, and Pedlow was challenged to say where he wanted it put.

The poor man limped round it seeking inspiration from its bulk and feeling, beneath the ox-eyed impassive gaze of his questioner, as embarrassed as an actor who does not know his part. It could not conveniently be stacked in the backyard; a proposal to transfer its great weight to a remote part of the grounds would meet with no enthusiasm, and it could hardly be left in the drive or on a garden path. Just as he was about to confess himself at a loss, he received, as it were out of the blue, a perfect solution.

"Place the stone," he instructed the foreman, "beneath that oak—just beyond the long branch you see".

The foreman looked in the direction indicated, and saw the bole of a tree which rose straight and massive as the pillar of a temple unencumbered by branches for ten or twelve feet from the ground. At that height the first of a number of big limbs stretched

out almost horizontally. A few yards beyond the tree a clipped hedge of privet concealed a kitchen garden from the windows of the house.

THE vision had occurred to Pedlow of the slab, raised knee-high from the ground by stone pedestals placed like the legs of a refectory table at either end, serving a useful purpose on a summer afternoon. At it he could take tea, on it he could lay books, baskets, or garden trowels and the like. While the workmen hesitated, considering how they should handle the stone for even the short distance involved, again, and to his own surprise, Pedlow found words to solve the problem springing to his lips.

"Rollers," he announced, or rather, it seemed to himself, repeated; for the idea came to him as a word whispered from a great distance into the middle of his ear. The thought, quickly comprehended, had followed. For the men too the word was self-explanatory.

IT was late autumn before the house was ready for occupation so that the use of the stone as a garden tea-table had to be deferred. Pedlow was at first amused, however, at the way in which it was commandeered by a large and very self-confident robin. The bird not only showed little fear when he approached, but standing its ground would cock a thoughtful eye at him. And after a few days he began to feel that his interest in the little fellow was rather markedly reciprocated, that the robin in fact was keeping an eye on him. It was a ridiculous supposition, but the fact remained that he did not sit down to his breakfast at a table in the bow window of the morning-room without the robin appearing for a moment on the sill outside, as if to take note of him. When he came out of the house it would be waiting on the doorstep, and from time to time perched on the big branch above the stone table while he was gardening, as though to observe him from a control tower. His amusement changed gradually not so much to annoyance as to a sense of slight uneasiness at behaviour which seemed to indicate motive so deliberate but unintelligible in a creature.

Nothing, however, occurred for several weeks to diminish his daily delight in the beauty of his surroundings and the variety of the trees with which the property was planted. The grounds comprised a number of fields laid down to permanent pasture and encompassing the house on every side. At the far corner of a field which rose steeply behind it tood a handsome collection of beech trees. Here and there in the other fields good specimens were to be found of hazel and holly, beech and ash, oak, alder, and even willow. There was a fine apple orchard and as might be expected several different of sorts conifer.

THE first hint of alarm did not reach me until November was well advanced, when Pedlow wrote and mentioned the matter of the lights. The subject had first been broached by his man, who with his wife, made up the domestic staff. As he drew the curtains in the study at tea time he had complained one evening of "them lights in the beech wood". He had seen them on several occasions from his bedroom window on going round the upstairs rooms after supper; sometimes just one, sometimes two or three dodging between the tree trunks. People with lamps after rabbits, he had supposed, on their way to "the tops", as the gorse and bramble infested heights above the valley were called. If a few of the lads of the village chose to take a cut across the fields, you couldn't blame them, though he didn't like it. But his anxiety found words now because "they're beginning early tonight. My wife saw a light when she was upstairs just now. There's nobody would be out after rabbits so early". Christmas was not far off and my old friend had assembled a useful flock of poultry and was fattening a few choice turkeys. There were characters in the neighbourhood whose thoughts were known to turn to other

folks' hen roosts at this season. His man was plainly worried about prowlers.

It was against this background that Pedlow decided to investigate the matter for himself and at dusk the next evening picked up a torch and set out in the direction of the hen-houses. His route lay through the kitchen garden. Frost was in the air; in the stillness which overlay the countryside small sounds were magnified and audible for a great distance. Near the gate in the privet hedge he stopped at the stone table to survey the back field with its mysterious beechwood. While he paused there his attention was arrested by a sound as of dead leaves lightly stirring beyond the hedge. Sybillant and insistent, it gradually assumed in his ears the form of whispered words, words which alarmed him. "*We'll get him yet,*" a voice behind the hedge was breathing into an unseen ear.

HIM! Was not the word perhaps "them"? Startled but incredulous he dashed through the gateway flashing his torch and hoping to find the speaker a man with designs upon his hen roost, but more than afraid of finding no one. And as he feared, the torch revealed no glimpse of human form, nor could his ears catch any further sound of words.

A visit to the hen house confirmed that its door had already been locked and the birds all gone to roost.

Conscious that his nerves had been a little shaken, and determined to regain control of himself and his imagination, he decided to extend his investigation to the beech wood, and started with his curious limping step across the field towards it. Before he had covered more than half the distance a pin point of light pricked the darkness already thickening among the trees, shone for two or three seconds, and went out as abruptly as that of a lighthouse. Someone, he supposed, moving between the tree trunks.

But when he reached the spot from which it had seemed to originate, there was nobody to be seen and nothing to account for its occurrence. He directed the beam of his torch here and there between the trees in a vain endeavour to detect some sign of movement. While so engaged there sounded at his back a chuckle low but distinct. Swinging round abruptly he caught a glimpse, as the light passed over a tree, of a head peering round its trunk. A head, eyeless and featureless as that of the most primitive rag doll, but a head nevertheless of human dimensions, concealed as it were behind wrappings of some grey material like stockinette. When Pedlow had checked his swing and brought the torch to bear upon the tree, the watcher had vanished, and further search merely suggested that he was falling a victim to auditory and visual hallucination.

THE story of this adventure reached me in a letter written within a day or two of its occurrence and urging me to spend Christmas with him. And I would gladly have accepted the invitation had circumstances permitted; one or two things which he had mentioned had seemed to me significant by reason of their association. It was as though two pieces of a jig-saw puzzle had been tossed into my lap, and fitted together: they implied the existence of others and of a picture. But the other pieces were to find, and the picture not yet predictable.

For instance, the robin! Not more remarkable than the insistence with which it had forced itself on Pedlow's attention, was the folklore which his mention of it recalled to me. The robin figures prominently upon Christmas cards, but few, who have not studied folklore, could say by what symbolism he came to be associated with the greatest of birth days, and many do not realize how pugnacious and thug-like he is by disposition. Then again the variety and quantity of trees in which my friend rejoiced awoke another echo in my mind. And as I pictured him limping across to the beech wood apprehension, for which I could not yet have given a reasonable account, awoke within me. I replied promising to be with him early in

January, and advising him to desist from investigations after dark, until we could make them together.

In the days that followed Pedlow experienced so many trifling incidents, real or imagined, which he viewed as uncanny and not susceptible of reasonable explanation that, as his man observed later, "me and the wife became jumpy, too". On one occasion his master having run upstairs for some article on a moonlit evening before supper had sworn that he had seen from his bedroom window dark shapes resembling up-ended bolsters which like a line of beaters were closing in upon the house across the front field. They propelled themselves he declared, like runners in a sack race, in short hops bending forward. However, they never materialized beyond the trees which ringed the lawn, or lent themselves to closer inspection.

Again one evening, returning after dusk from a visit to the post box fixed in a wall not far from the drive gates, he was overtaken by a passing car and startled to see in the light of its headlamps a long robed figure turning into the drive a few yards ahead of him. When he quickened his pace and at the gate switched on his torch, its beam showed only an empty drive sloping up before him. But as he moved up it a scuffling in the shrubbery on either side suggested an unseen escort. Arrived at the front door he fumbled nervously with his latch key at the lock, terrified as in a nightmare of looking back. At last the key engaged, the door swung open, and crossing the threshold he turned to close it; it was what he then saw that forced him to call out. Ascending the steps of the porch and clearly visible in the light above the door were two bare feet which ended at the ankles. In an instant his man was on the scene and the hall a blaze of light, but as quickly the feet had vanished and search with lamps in front of the house failed to disclose the tracks or any trace of his follower.

BEFORE the shortest day dawned Pedlow came to accept the existence of a body of *revenants* and their interest in him as indisputable fact. This makes his subsequent behaviour all the stranger. The day arrived upon which the dying solar year expires. Ground frost, a cloudless sky, and a great calm marked its last hours. And upon Pedlow's man I am again dependent for an account of the events which accompanied its departure. Pruned of irrelevancies the story is best given in his own words.

"My master was very restless all day and seemed to be even more anxious than usual. He had spoken of wishing to go away for Christmas and went so far as to make arrangements to visit Torquay, but at the last moment cancelled them. It seemed as if, when it came to the point of actually leaving the house, he had no will of his own but became sort of listless. On the day in question he expressed regret at not having gone, but said it was too late to do anything about it. He cut some holly for the house, did a little carpentry in his workshop, clipped a hedge, but nothing for long and never left the grounds. He was anxious about the turkeys and reminded me to lock them up early, saying it was the shortest day and dark before tea time. He also grumbled about the robin, saying it went wherever he did, and was haunting him.

"When I was drawing the blinds upstairs I noticed that there were far more lights dodging about than I had ever seen before, not only in the beech wood now but appearing and disappearing from points all round the house, some at the bottom of the drive, some in the orchard, and a few along the hedges across the fields. I said nothing about them to Mr. Pedlow as I did not want to upset him.

"About ten o'clock I went up to bed. The landing was so brilliantly lit up by the moon that I did not trouble to turn on the light above the stairs. It was while I paused at the landing window to admire the full moon that shrill cries broke out in the direction of the hen house. They sounded as though the hens and turkeys were being chased screeching round the building. Immediately the door of the conservatory which adjoins the study

opened and my master came running out. So I ran downstairs to join him.

"WHEN I reached the garden the noise had ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and I saw him pause near the stone table listening. What next happened brought me to a full stop, too. On the branch beneath which Mr. Pedlow was standing a ball of crimson light appeared. It seemed to be balanced on, or floating just above the branch and it quickly grew before my eyes into a luminous sphere as big as a large Chinese lantern. Some black lines were moving like strands of seaweed in the middle of it. Then suddenly this incandescent globe rolled off the branch and floated light as thistledown on to his back, and a dry, harsh voice from up in the tree said quite distinctly, *'We've got him now.*"

"Before I had recovered my wits and started forward to his rescue the light vanished as completely as that of an extinguished lamp, and left the body of my master visible in the moonlight slumped across the stone slab. When I reached him he was dead. While I stood beside his body amazed and unable to believe my eyes, the silence was broken by a succession of shrill notes from a bird in the privet hedge. They sounded strange at that time of night."

AS soon as this tragic news arrived I wired for a room at the village inn and came over by plane to the Island. And there, when I had seen the house and heard the story of Reggie's end, I found enough of the missing pieces of the jig-saw to put together a probable but horrifying picture of the drama in which he had been assigned the leading rôle. But first I attended the inquest to hear what the law made of it. A local physician satisfied the coroner that death had been due to heart failure—an explanation about as informative as most of the findings of medical science.

I also heard what I had not known before, that the glen was named Glen Keyle. And Keyle, I learned, is the Manx for grove. At once the picture began to take shape; for to the mythologist or student of folk-lore groves are places of sinister significance. They were consecrated to the Mother Goddess of Death-in-life and Life-in-death, known in one of her aspects as the Moon Goddess. The primitive world reckoned little of free-will; everyone and everything was subject to destiny, and destinies were imposed by the Great Goddess. Trees supplied the material for much religious symbol in her worship; the seven pillars of wisdom were themselves the seven sacred trees of the grove, and the very name, Nemesis, Goddess of Vengeance, derives from the Greek, *nemos*, a grove.

Male sacrifice formed an essential part of the worship. A king, chosen at the commencement of each new year to represent the Spirit of the waxing year, was sacrificed at midsummer, when the seasons of growth give place to those of decay. A king of the dying year, chosen to reign in his stead, was in turn done to death at the year's end. But as death was observed to be the prelude to new life, the spirit of the old king was held to be reborn at the new year. These early communities were totem societies, and among them the robin was the totem of the New Year king, that of his predecessor was the wren.

I HAD now no doubt that Pedlow's house occupied the centre of a one-time sacred grove, and for my part felt no less convinced that by some means, of which we are at present ignorant, the excavation and re-erection of what had clearly been an ancient stone of sacrifice had released from the physical "field" powerful psychic forces connected with the ancient worship and localized and concentrated at this spot.

Inspection of the stone provided corroborative evidence; in its centre, faint and eroded by the passage of centuries but still to be traced by anyone who knew what to look for, was the tell-tale incision, the twofold spiral typifying life and rebirth. The outer line of the spiral leading to its centre was reduplicated by an inner spiral running back from the

centre to the starting point; life leading to the grave, and from death life being renewed.

As for the lights, observed by every member of the household, they were, I surmise, phosphorescent in character, globular, like the one last seen, in shape, and represented stages of partial materialization.

BUT more puzzling than Pedlow's end was its appearance of having been prepared for; something more than chance seems to be required to account for the steps by which the victim was led to the scene of sacrifice and to set in motion the mechanism by which his death was accomplished. His approach had so much the appearance of being predetermined; his feeling for trees, his ancestry, his sense almost of *déjà vu* on first looking over the place, its immediate availability, above all his royal limp—a mark of dedication in the eyes of those long-dead worshippers—suggested that he was less responsible for his decisions than he had supposed, that he was no less unwittingly obedient to another mind than the hypnotized patient to his hypnotist. For most of us, it may be supposed, body and brain provide a screen shutting us off from the direct influence of other minds, incarnate or otherwise; for Pedlow, however, the screen, I believe, was perforated and his experiences towards the end were genuinely clairvoyant and clairaudient. And even for his man the thought of an unseen thinker had been so charged with power that he had received it in the form of words intelligible to him and apparently audible.

The next day being a Sunday and no means of return to the mainland existing, I took the opportunity to explore the countryside. It was while I was strolling up a narrow lane that a stone sailed through the hedge and knocked my hat off; a gang of youngsters in a neighbouring field were raking the hedge with sticks and stones. "Thar she goes," cried a voice, and a tiny feathered speck streaked past me down the lane. The village lads were quite unknowingly enacting as a pastime, traditional at this season, the ancient ritual of their ancestral worship; that of hunting and killing the old king in his form of a wren. Later in the day they would visit, as mummers, many of the houses in the neighbourhood, and one boy dressed in a white gown and holding a dead wren, would lead his companions as they sang the centuries' old song, "We'll hunt the wren". The old religion, I reflected, could still command unwitting acolytes no less than an unwitting victim. The power of the Great Goddess might seem to have vanished into the limbo of long forgotten, far off things; in fact her forces lay round about, unseen, but watchful, and waiting.

LITERATURE AND CRITICISM

FOUNDATIONS OF ISRAEL

Edited by CHRISTOPHER SYKES

MR. KOESTLER'S book,* tracing the history of Jewish fortunes in Palestine from 1917 to 1949 is far the best thing he has produced on this subject. His novel "Thieves in the Night," describing pre-war life in a Zionist agricultural settlement, was powerful fiction enforced by psychological insight, but as history it was fatally distorted by propagandist old wives' tales. The present book contains a record, mostly reliable, of the manner in which Israel was founded anew during the last thirty-five years.

This is not to say that the book is free of bias. On the contrary, the Jewish case is given preferential treatment throughout, even though Mr. Koestler has been at pains to disclose the repellent side of the Jewish struggle for nationhood. Certain dominant elements of the problem, especially that of Arab nationalism, are presented as minor matters, and he stresses far too little the human suffering inflicted on that part of the world by the Jewish-made refugee problem. He causes an impression, though with more attention to facts than he used in his novel, that the Emir Feisal was a supporter of the Zionist movement. The Emir was certainly prepared to support Zionism in an independent Arab Empire, but not otherwise. Mr. Koestler's readers are not likely to discover that fact. In the beginning of the book he provides a striking illustration of how admission of damaging facts can be joined to a propagandist aim. "In plain language," he says of the Mandate, "the League requisitioned Palestine from its owners to provide the Jews with a permanent abode." Eight paragraphs later he says: "It was an honest deal." Such is the skill of the writing that the reader has no sense of contradiction.

Nevertheless, even admitting that the book is not as impartial as it appears, it is a valuable contribution to the understanding of a unique fascinating, and appalling episode in modern history. It should be widely read in this country. For years Palestine has been so misrepresented in Parliament and the Press that the great majority of English people are perplexed and deeply distressed by the apparently senseless ingratitude of the Jews to the one nation which has striven to give them a dwelling in the Promised Land. This book entirely explains the causes of that unlooked-for enmity. It explains how the act of generosity embodied in the Balfour Declaration has led to a division between Jew and Gentile, and not to anything resembling a reconciliation. A basic reason for this is perhaps to be found in the fact that while to one following the Jewish religion the return to the Jews to Palestine is not only desirable but imperative, to a Gentile the proposition is only of antiquarian interest and not worth the slightest suffering. People who hold these two points of view cannot fail to irritate each other.

Gentile historians of the future will surely regard the Balfour Declaration as the most colossal blunder ever made by a British Government. On two counts that blunder was culpable, from a Gentile point of view. It was based on an underestimation of the universal character of nationalism, an unpardonable mistake to have made in the middle of a nationalist war; and secondly on an under estimation of the depth of the religious impulse which connects the Jewish people with a certain part of the earth. Of the latter Balfour was frequently warned; he took no notice. But the gravest circumstance which led to disaster could not be foreseen. It was assumed that Europe would continue to show an ascending scale of civilized

* *Promise and Fulfilment.* By Arthur Koestler. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

conduct. The opposite was the fact. Shortly after Balfour's lifetime Europe was not sufficiently civilized to be trusted with minorities, and the whole weight of that relapse fell on Palestine.

People in England will continue to wonder, for many years to come, what impelled Lloyd George's Coalition Government to make the famous declaration. Mr. Koestler understands that part of the story. Both pro-Arab and anti-Zionist propagandists have insisted that Lloyd George and Balfour were wicked men out for their own advantage, but the bulk of the evidence goes to show, again and again, that the Declaration was the sincerely religious act of men to whom the Bible was a precious possession. Strangely enough, Lloyd George himself gave disreputable reasons for his part in the Declaration when he submitted evidence to the Palestine Royal Commission of 1936; he said that the undertaking was "due to propagandists reasons". There is much better evidence to suppose that his memory was at fault on this occasion, and it is a lively testimony to the scoundrelism of politics that a former Prime Minister should remember his most disinterested action as a piece of crooked self-seeking. It is clear, however, and this is very important to an understanding of what happened, that neither Lloyd George nor Balfour expected the National Home to fire the Jewish imagination as it did. They were not merely foolish in this. Had there been no Nazism the Palestine problem would, in all likelihood, have been easily and amicably settled with time. Nazism made the Palestine question one without any solution but a difficult one. Unfortunately the British Government did not notice that anything particularly important had happened.

Mr. Koestler has many bitter things to say about the ineptitude of our rule in Palestine. Almost every word of his denunciation is justified, but he errs sometimes on the side of cruelty when describing the conduct of the people on the spot. No Administration, no matter how well-intentioned, and the Palestine one was for the most part very well-intentioned, can show high qualities when discharging a policy which cannot, by any conceivable means, be put into effect; and that was the situation which confronted every Palestine official, from 1933 to 1949. Finally, and inevitably, they went to pieces.

This is what happened. When Jewry fled from Europe a huge number went, by an irresistible impulse, to Palestine, the Promised Land. This provoked an intensely difficult situation. Two very unpleasant alternatives immediately faced the British Government. Either they needed to say to their Arab Allies (who were being wooed on the sly by Hitler and Mussolini): "Palestine must be allowed to take as many Jews as come. This will probably mean a Jewish State quite soon. You must make the best of it and rely on us to keep the peace." Or else they needed to say to the Jews: "The Balfour Declaration never envisaged great numbers or a Jewish State. The Promise is fulfilled because over a quarter million Jews have a home here. There is no more room, but you may emigrate to our colonies and to Great Britain in as large numbers as you wish." (A Government which said this might easily have fallen.) Either alternative was full of danger, but there was no other honourable course left open to us. So we took a dishonourable course instead, as people usually do in such straits. We made a compromise embodied in the Palestine White Paper of 1939, which was slightly favourable to the Arabs who had just staged a rebellion, and definitely unfavourable to the Jews who, with remarkable moral courage, had practised self-restraint as a policy. No adequate non-Palestinian solution was offered to the Jews as compensation. As a result of that compromise we have now been kicked out of Palestine, ten years later, amid every circumstance of ignominy. Our departure from Ireland was almost dignified by comparison.

Mr. Koestler rightly believes that policy, therefore history, is fashioned by fools, not by knaves. In that connection he has many diverting things to say about

the romantic pro-Arabism which influenced the drawing-up of the White Paper. He contrasts our appeasement of the Arabs with the Anglophobia displayed in the Arab world during the war. In this part of the book he is unhistorical. Largely as a result of the White Paper the pro-English parties in Egypt, Irak, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine, were influential throughout the war with much benefit to ourselves. One reason why Rashid Ali's plot failed in Irak was that it did not become a genuine popular movement. It would never have happened at all if the Foreign Office had not been inept. No troops were diverted, as in World War I, for the security of Egypt, despite the pro-Axis bent of the Court. Ibn Saud's pro-British attitude was of great benefit to us in our friendless days.

An Englishman may regard the White Paper as a useful expedient if he only looks at the Arab side of the picture. He should not regard the Jewish side with anything but shame. The *Patria* episode, the most disgusting event in the story of illegal immigration, was probably not the act of mass-suicide described by Mr. Koestler, but the result of an extremist Jewish plot. Nevertheless, it symbolized the atrocious result of a British policy whereby Jewish refugees were denied access to Palestine without any undertaking that they would receive shelter elsewhere. The five-year detention by us in prison conditions of the Jewish refugees who arrived in the steamer *Atlantic* in 1940 was not known before to the present reviewer. Unless Mr. Koestler's account is very inaccurate or exaggerated, and there is no reason to think it is, this was one of the most horrible acts of meanness ever ordered by a British Government. The barbaric reprisals taken by Jews on Englishmen in Palestine after the war can be explained by this event alone.

The last phase of our abominable failure in Palestine opened with the appointment of Mr. Bevin to the Foreign Office. For him Mr. Koestler, a fellow-Socialist, has his hardest words. With the advent of Socialists to power, one of the dangers of an idealistic policy (such as our Jewish policy in Palestine inescapably is, for all its baseness), came fully to light. The danger is this: that democracy, though the most equitable form of Government, is not less crude than others, because it depends not equally but more on flattery of its subjects, and so, unless it restricts itself to immediate simple and practical tasks, the oratory which lubricates the system may make its aims distant from ability to achieve. Impassioned oratory had already led Great Britain into the awkward predicament of having to declare a war without having armed first. It had led her to having a policy in Palestine which none could discharge. The Labour Party had no interest in the Arab world which they associated with pernicious conservatism, and they had declared themselves for years to be an out-and-out Zionist party, so that it seemed, at the last moment, that the way out of the problem which was shirked in 1933 would now be put into operation. Moreover, Mr. Bevin had declared that he would solve the Palestine problem, a daring utterance. Then, for the first time, the Labour Party learned that this problem was not so simple as they had stated in their speeches. At the same time the 1933 situation (as it affected Palestine) was repeated on a larger scale. The whole remnant of European Jewry strove to reach the land which had now been promised three times. Mr. Bevin, influenced perhaps by the revolting excesses of the Jewish extremists, lost his head. Mr. Koestler's description of the demoralization not only of our policy but of the unfortunate Englishman entrusted with trying to carry it out, is painful reading. Unfortunately what he says is true.

He ends his book on a strangely optimistic note. Now that the Jews have a national state he seems to expect that they will become "as other people". In his first chapter he asserts that Jewish character is a product of psychological pressures which are not unique, and he points to similar minorities formed by

Greeks and Armenians. This reads like an underestimation, a new one in this long tale of underestimation, of the force within the Jewish people which has taken them where they now are. Mr. Koestler does not remark on the fact that the Jews are of greater antiquity than any national group outside China and India, nor does he remark that unlike the Greeks and Armenians, unlike any other small group, they exert an immense influence over the whole Near Eastern and Western worlds. That such a history as theirs should end in the quiet civic contentment of an Eastern Luxembourg is surely to rely too much on the element of anticlimax in human life. Arthur Balfour held similar views. He thought that the Jews would be radically altered by the possession of land. He was wrong in most of his views on Palestine, and may be proved wrong in this, too. The New Israel is more likely to be a beginning rather than an end.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES.

A VICTORIAN PROPHET

JOHN RUSKIN: THE PORTRAIT OF A PROPHET. By Peter Quennell. *Collins.* 15*s.*

THE son of a prosperous wine merchant and an "unassailable prude" who was thirty-eight when she bore him, John Ruskin, indulged, flattered, oppressed throughout his childhood, lamented many years later "I had nothing to love". Thus his obsession for the first girl he met, at seventeen, French Roman Catholic, increased as its hopefulness diminished, until he developed at Oxford a psychologically induced consumption on hearing of Adèle's marriage and, returning to his parent's enhanced domination, retired into his defensive private universe.

The first volume of *Modern Painters*, published when he was twenty-four, brought adulation to Ruskin, already "deeply imbued with the sense of natural superiority, both moral and intellectual". At twenty-six he returned from his first independent trip abroad to his parents' house, sinking back into "the faintness and darkness of the Under World", a phrase betokening the conviction of sin underlying his spiritual pride.

After a desolating courtship of another very young girl, Ruskin wooed Effie Gray, a girl of wit, charm, beauty, physical grace and extreme good nature under the provocation of Ruskin's sophisticated refusal to consummate their marriage. Failure as a man prompted Ruskin to behave as a blackguard, writing from abroad to her father that Effie was insane. Mr. Quennell does his best for Ruskin in this matter, but it makes poor reading. Ruskin had again come entirely under his parents' domination, and it is impossible to feel sympathy for a man who, however lamentable the circumstances of his upbringing, had at thirty developed neither courage nor compassion. He turned to work: the marriage lasted six years before Effie obtained an annulment. Mr. Quennell, having summed up in Effie's favour, gives the verdict against her, dismissing her to her perfect marriage with Millais with something of a contemptuous suggestion that she was unfitted for anything better. The suspicion that here the author is working off a personal spite against womankind is confirmed when he writes of Jane Carlyle, whose marriage was also unconsummated, that "she had been killed by the hysterical outcry of a badly frightened lapdog". She had not; she had been killed by marriage to Carlyle, an incomparably more terrible experience. Again, Ruskin's faults are defined as "feminine": Ruskin's trouble was not femininity, the quality of undistorted womanhood, but effeminacy, the property of perverted manhood.

His love of beauty mocked always by his sense of sin, Ruskin wrote, lectured, suffered and projected great schemes, all, like his marriage, unconsummated, but the sublimation of his sense of guilt into a scheme of world betterment resulted in "Unto This Last", which profoundly affected the Socialist movement. At forty, he fell in love again,

with a child of nine, Rose La Touche. At fifty, his wish to marry Rose was finally frustrated by her mother's enquiries of Effie Millais as to his desirability as a husband. Mr. Quennell appears aggrieved at Effie's refusal to further Ruskin's wishes and secure Rose's destruction by perverting eternal truth.

In his isolation, Ruskin attempted finally to achieve communion with his fellow men. To his Slade Professorship he added the duties of instructing the working classes, publishing a series of letters, *Fors Clavigera*, over seven years. When, four years after his mother's death, Rose died of malignant Spurgeonism, Ruskin sought to return to religion through spiritualism. His mind gave way and though, after a period of recuperation at his Lakeland house, he was able to resume his Slade Professorship, his last lectures evoked more laughter than reverence. He retired again to Brantwood, where his mind seldom cleared sufficiently to allow of work, and he died insane at the age of eighty-one.

Mr. Quennell's perceptive, sympathetic and mostly admirable study of a man whose great mind was irredeemably lamed in childhood and youth persuades the reader that, when all possible favourable evidence has been adduced, the verdict must go that Ruskin, for all the genius of his inspiration, remained a contemptible human being. When one reflects on these impotent prophets of the Victorian era, recalling that Hitler was the philosophic heir of Carlyle, that Ruskin profoundly stimulated the growth of the Socialist state, one is moved to deeper reverence of that greater prophet Shakespeare, who, speaking through *King Lear*, said "Let copulation thrive".

BASIL HARVEY.

Novels

A FEARFUL JOY. Joyce Cary. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

LUCIFER WITH A BOOK. John Horne Burns. *Secker and Warburg.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

CAT O' NINE TAILS. Ellery Queen. *Victor Gollancz.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

THE CORNISH FOX. C. H. B. Kitchin. *Secker and Warburg.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

POISON FOR TEACHER. Henry Spain. *Hutchinson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

JOYCE CARY is one of our most gifted novelists. Few have his great skill in the use of words, and his zest for the stuff of life. Every now and then this delight in the exuberance of creation impels him to a riot of his own, such as *The Horse's Mouth*, which includes, among the most gaudy scenes of low life, a wholly convincing portrait of a great painter. *A Fearful Joy* is in the same temper. Because it does not make such calls upon the writer's visual powers we are not given the high-winged flights of description, but we are given a narrative which for all its jerks and oddities, its telescoping of years, and its use of the historic present, is as sheerly readable as any streamlined best-seller, with one portrait at least which is on a par with that of Gully Jimson in the earlier book.

Dick Bonser is a superb bounder. He epitomizes all those qualities which make women love bounders; he is physically magnetic, has great sexual vitality, is kind in small things and generous with anyone's money, even his own. He seduces young Tabitha Baskett (Mr. Cary has a Dickensian choice of apt odd names), and when her money is exhausted he leaves her expecting a child. Tabitha is introduced to an elderly would-be art patron, their literary salon in the nineties is very good fun, and when he dies she passes on to a

retired ironmaster whom she subsequently marries. This individual has a recrudescence of wealth and influence during the 1914-18 war and his widow manages to salvage a modest fortune. Tabitha, now in her fifties, is thrown back on her family, her son is married to a donnish young woman who freezes Tabitha away from her grandchild, and just as it seems that life is fading out, Bonser reappears. Age and reverses have not exhausted him. He is as fertile of schemes as ever, and in the post-war world and with Tabitha's money, some of them actually come off. To Tabitha's family and friends, Bonser is her ruin. To Tabitha herself he is the breath of life, and we are made to feel in a very real sense that she is in fact indebted to him.

There is a lot of social comment lightly woven into this story of seventy years. For me the changes are summed up in the contrast between Dick Bonser, that *Pink 'Un* period piece, and the uncouth, humorless ex-airman, Parkin, whose role towards Nancy, Tabitha's granddaughter, is clearly to be the same as Bonser's towards Tabitha. Life has grown thinner and drabber; Nancy will get no more cash and much less fun. As a retrospect of seventy years of a woman's life *A Fearful Joy* is far better than *The Old Wives Tale*.

JOHN HORNE BURNS, who wrote *The Gallery*, is another writer bursting with vitality, but he is so enraged with what he sees that his vision gets blurred and he can never be bothered to fuse his store of impressions and convictions into a plot. When I began *Lucifer with a Book* I thought he had grown out of this. The writing was quieter and more authoritative, the scene was well laid. It soon goes to pieces, however, when an American war veteran, Guy Hudson, goes to teach in the fashionable and expensive academy which has resulted from an old New England lady's bequest. The follies and vices of pupils and staff are caricatured rather than satirized, the violence is ill-directed and the coarseness is without point. Readers of advanced American novels will not be surprised to learn that the only tolerable characters among the pupils are a negro, a Jew, and a poor scholarship boy with a good mother. The hero manages to bear up in a welter of hypocrisy, cruelty and perversion until somebody starts an O.T.C. This is too much for him. After a long speech, a good speech, about the failure of America, he shakes off the dust of the Abercrombie Academy and departs.

It is difficult to take the book seriously because it is so adolescent, but the sense of their country's importance and the individual's responsibility to it which all these young American writers have, is something to be admired: we have nothing comparable. Our most gifted writers turn inwards or aside.

THOSE who are considering thrillers for Christmas presents may take their choice from three very good ones on my list. First, the Ellery Queen, the classic detective story form with more erudition and ingenuity than ninety-nine out of a hundred. True, I preferred detective stories when they dealt with understandable motives, such as suppressed wills, thwarted love or skeletons in the cupboard; but since the psychiatrist now appears at every murder trial, why should the writer forgo his help? *The Cornish Fox* is a very English thriller, a bit slow in getting under weigh and stronger in atmosphere than in plot, but it has full marks for style and characterization. Admirers of Nancy Spain will not expect anything quiet and sober from *Poison for Teacher*, in which the enchanting Natasha du Vivian and her friend Miriam Birdseye run the craziest detective outfit that any novel has ever produced. They are called in to investigate mysterious happenings at Radcliffe Hall, a girls' school closely related to St. Trinian's, and how the deuce the writer manages to weave and unravel a complicated plot among all these high jinks is *the* mystery for me, but she does it again and better than ever.

RUBY MILLAR.

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EZRA POUND

THE PISAN CANTOS. By Ezra Pound. *Faber & Faber.* 12*s* 6*d.*

THIS section of the long poem which was begun by Mr. Pound a good many years ago is called the "Pisan" cantos, because it was written during the poet's detention at an American army camp near Pisa, after the arrival in Italy of the armies of liberation. Treason was the sufficiently ugly charge for his detention, but upon trial he was adjudged to be irresponsible for his actions. Instead of incurring the death-penalty, Mr. Pound remains in permanent detention in Washington. In due course *The Pisan Cantos* appeared in book form in America, just as previous sections of the long poem had appeared in book form; and a committee appointed to award a prize for poetry awarded it a prize. Since then the witch-hunters have been up with a vengeance, in effect arraigning the the prize-committee for treason, and smelling-out anyone else who dares to say a good word for the cantos. On any telescopic view, that witch-hunt is irrelevant. The ultimate problem was stated quite simply by Plato. If and when for political reasons a poet has to be put away, that does not deny him the honour he should receive as a poet, if he is a poet. It is to the question whether *The Pisan Cantos* is poetry, that I address these words.

Mr. Pound has never bothered to make himself easy to read; but that is no criterion, else you would have to rule out, among others, Browning. As a fact, these cantos are much easier to read than others which have preceded them. Whoever wrote the publisher's blurb is right in claiming that "they are both more lucid and more moving than some of their predecessors, with the same technical mastery but a new poignancy of human speech". If you like them, you may have to like them in spite of all sorts of things. You will certainly have to slough off dislike for bits of Greek, or Chinese ideographs, or private jokes which stud the pages. But you will miss the whole point if you feel that these things are to be understood in any sense which is too narrow, too pedantic, too literal. Except by introducing such shards and orts of dignity, with the consciousness of dignity and the consciousness of decay, how could the impact of this writer be achieved?

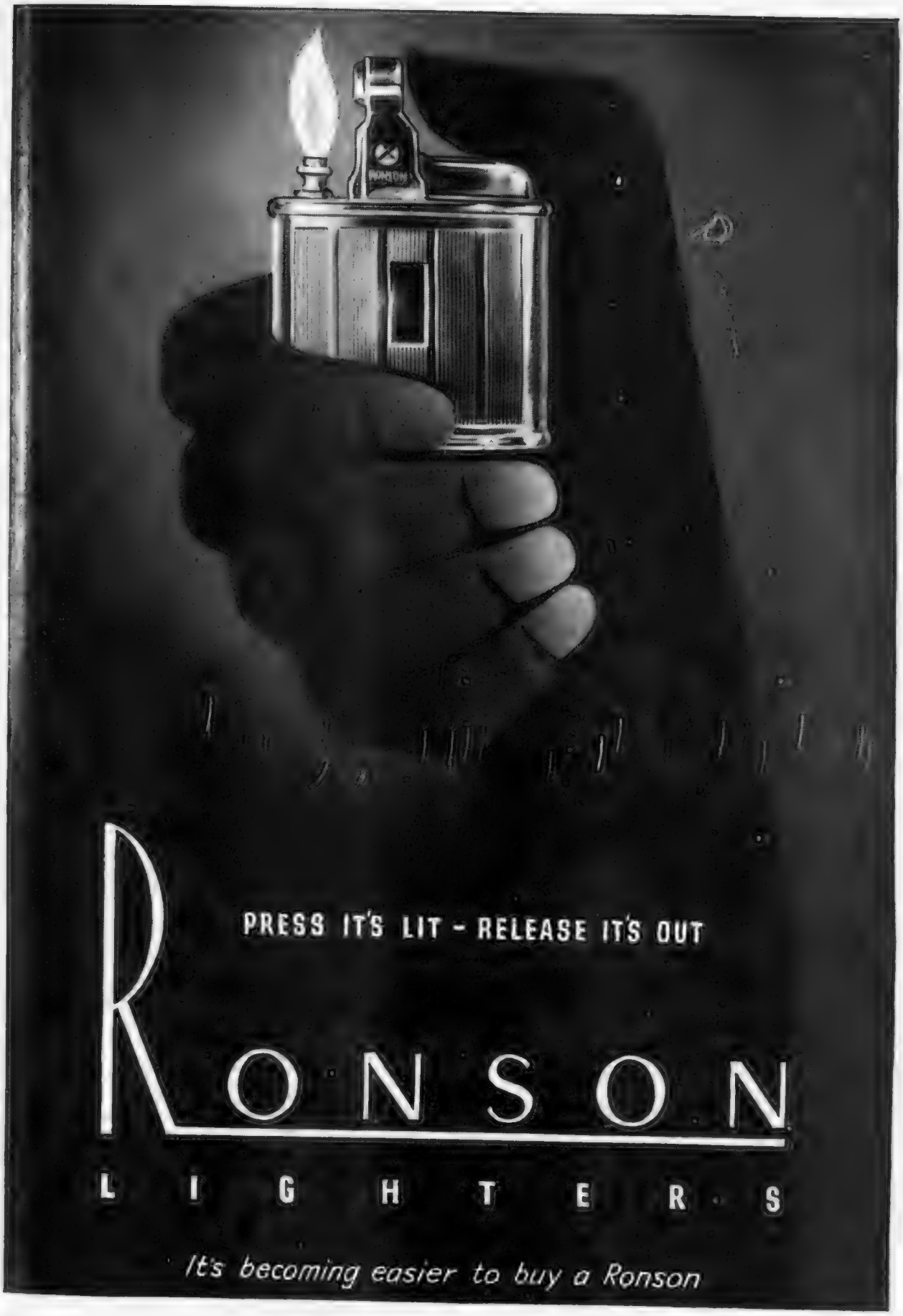
> As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill
> from the wreckage of Europe, *ego scriptor.*

From the wreckage of Europe. A wreckage felt so deeply, understood so intricately, as not to be expressed, by Mr. Pound at least, in any other way; expressed as it is, in music: what other demand is to be made? The music of these cantos is undeniable.

> Tudor indeed is gone and every rose
> Blood-red, blanch-white that in the sunset glows
> Cries: "Blood, Blood, Blood", against the gothic stone
> Of England, as the Howard or Boleyn knows.

Of that lyrical interlude I would quote more, except that in a confined space I wish to have room to quote this:

> Pull down thy vanity
> Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
> A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
> Half black half white
> Nor knows t'ou wing from tail
> Pull down thy vanity
> How mean thy hates
> Fostered in falsity.
> Pull down thy vanity,
> Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
> Pull down thy vanity,
> I say pull down.
>
> But to have done instead of not doing
> this is not vanity
> To have, with decency, knocked
> That a Blunt should open
> To have gathered from the air a live
> tradition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or from a fine old eye the unconquered
flame
This is not vanity.
Here error is all in the not done,
all in the diffidence that faltered.

I do not feel that any committee could make a mistake in awarding Mr. Pound a prize for poetry.

F. V. MORLEY.

AN UNMITIGATED BLACKGUARD

TITUS OATES. By Jane Lane. *Andrew Dakers.* 21*s.*

THIS is one of the best biographies that has appeared for many years. Miss Lane has clearly taken immense pains to ensure that her researches should be complete, but her learning sits lightly upon her, and she has written an eminently readable book. She makes both her subjects and her period come to life in a way that should appeal to every class of reader.

Titus Oates was without exception the most evil man that has so far appeared on the English political stage. There was hardly a vice to which he was not addicted, and he delighted in a variety of sins rarely combined in the same individual. Indeed, so bad was he that it is unlikely that he would have been able to impose even upon the gullible English public in one of its moments of hysteria had it not suited two very important statesmen to make use of him for their own ends.

The real villains of the so-called Popish Plot were Danby and Shaftesbury. Danby encouraged Oates at the beginning in order to distract Parliament from the attack which it was preparing upon himself, and Shaftesbury deliberately used the Salamanca Doctor as the spearhead of his attack upon the monarchy. That innocent lives were sacrificed, hundreds of families were ruined, and thousands of homes were disrupted, meant nothing to these worthies.

On only one point will some readers feel inclined to break a lance with Miss Lane, and that is in her attitude towards Charles II, who she thinks should have made more effort to save the victims of the Plot, since he knew that they were guiltless. Yet had he made a move in their favour it would have meant civil war, and in these circumstances it is difficult to resist the conclusion that this was one of those not infrequent occasions in history when a few innocent people have to suffer for the nation. For the rest, it may be added, the author does full justice to the King's statesmanship.

In fine, this is a remarkable book, and is a real contribution to the study of the seventeenth century.

CHARLES PETRIE.

FICTION IN BASIC

READING A NOVEL. By Walter Allen. *Phoenix House.* 5s.

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I remember in my father's study finding a pile of tracts meant for parishioners in the nineteenth century. They were meant to teach them thrift, to eschew swearing, to give

The Rt. Hon.

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up drink and to avoid fornication. They were just like Mr. Allen's tract, though in better English, with fewer clichés of word, if not of thought. The morality of the tracts could not be contradicted, the sense of Mr. Allen's tract cannot be reproached: so many people have said it before, as the clerics have repeatedly said "Do not drink, do not squander". Moral tracts for the lower orders have gone out, cultural tracts for untrained readers have come in; they are part of that movement of our day towards cultural slumming. I wish we all loathed preachments of the kind as we should. If Mr. Allen has talent, if Mr. Allen has ideas, would it not be as well for him to write up, not down? Have you ever noticed that cultural slumming was among the pursuits of any writer of consequence?

GEOFFREY GRIGSON.

THE TASTE OF ANGELS

A HISTORY OF ART COLLECTING FROM RAMESES TO NAPOLEON. By Francis Henry Taylor. *London* (*Hamish Hamilton*). 42*s. net.*

TO attempt so vast a theme as this work comprises were beyond the ambition of any writer not possessed of exceptional advantage of position and extraordinary erudition. Such advantage and such learning belong to Mr. Francis Henry Taylor, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and he has employed them with masterly skill.

A History of Art Collecting from Rameses II to Napoleon I, a period covering fully three thousand years, is a work demanding an immense range of research; yet still more formidable is the effort required to select from, to shape and vivify the huge mass of material collected. These labours Mr. Taylor has performed and these difficulties overcome. He has constructed a cultural monument of the first importance, one which will inspire and inform writers on this fascinating subject for generations to come.

This great volume of seven hundred pages, sumptuously illustrated with twelve plates in colour and ninety-seven reproductions in black-and-white, may best be described as a panorama of all that is most splendid and beautiful in the visible arts. From "the Pharaohs of ancient Egypt, the early Hellenic priests and treasurers of the Sanctuaries, the Tyrants of early Athens, Pericles, Alexander the Great and his generals", to Roman senators and emperors, the poet Virgil, the orator Cicero, the rapacious proconsul Verres (greatest of all Roman collectors); thence to the most enlightened minds of the Middle Age, the illustrious Duke of Berry, the four great Valois Dukes of Burgundy (with the last of whom, Charles the Bold, mediæval culture may be said to reach at once its summit and terminus); such is the glowing and various tapestry of events, personalities and masterpieces presented to our imagination.

Yet are these periods but a prelude to more extensive and intimate revelations of the passion for the rare and beautiful in times nearer to our own, for knowledge of which materials are more abundant. The Renaissance, as in all domains of creative energy, showed a splendid rebirth of connoisseurship: Roman pontiffs, Venetian Doges, the Medici in Florence, Gonzagas in Mantua, Estes in Ferrara, Sforzas in Milan, Dorias in Genoa, vied with one another in acquisition.

From Italy the reborn virtuosity spread through Europe. Princes and commercial magnates in Germany, Holland and Flanders; the Habsburg sovereigns in Austria and Spain; the French monarchs and their ministers, the Cardinals de Richelieu and Mazarin, and Colbert; the eccentric Queen Christina in Sweden; and "the great triumvirate in England—Charles I, Buckingham and Arundel", emulated the Medici and the Vatican.

The passion for collecting the rare, ancient and lovely is (as Mr. Taylor observes) "a complex and irrepressible expression of the inner individual, a sort of devil of which great personalities are frequently possessed. It is a curious coincidence that all of the men and women dealt with in these pages were highly interesting in their own right and would, indeed, have been so even had they never collected anything". This is true, but is it a coincidence? Rather, we believe it to be a fact that only persons of genius and powerful individuality, however various, are drawn to hazard their fortunes in pursuit of beauty and the treasures of antiquity. This view is forced on us as we walk with Mr. Taylor through the Florentine garden of Lorenzo the Magnificent, through the Duke of Buckingham's palace, York House, and the mansions of Rubens and Rembrandt. Regarding Buckingham, to whom a chapter is devoted (the material of which is drawn, to his satisfaction, from the present writer's monograph), Mr. Taylor has made a curious error when he styles him "George Francis Villiers": the prenomen of both the Villiers, Dukes of Buckingham, was "George"; "Francis" was the name of the 1st Duke's beautiful and heroic posthumous son. Such slips, and some oversights in notes and references, are, however, but as grains of dust upon a large and splendid canvas.

Arrived at the eighteenth century, an age of analysis in all things, we find a characteristic increase in æsthetic criticism and antiquarian science, largely due to the genius of Winckelmann and not a little to the taste of Horace Walpole. With the parallel enthusiasms of the Gothic revival and the classic grandeur of Napoleon's Roman spirit the history concludes. The Appendices, notably the first, on the relative value of money in different periods, complete worthily an achievement of the highest excellence.

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CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

THE AGE OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT. By Jacob Burckhardt. *Routledge and Kegan Paul*. 18*s*.

THE transition from pagan to Christian Rome was brilliantly depicted by Jacob Burckhardt as long ago as 1851, and his book is now reissued in a good new translation by Moses Hadas. It will repay careful study for the work is almost as remarkable for its defects as for its undoubted merits.

Nothing is here lost in the telling, and the reader will find himself carried along on a swift tide of picturesque description relating to a theme which is at present of immediate interest: the hazardous transformation of an old and established civilization. Of course corrections need now to be made. The view of the *Historia Augusta* here given would not to-day be accepted by many scholars, and those who wish to understand the policy of Constantine between the battles of the Milvian Bridge and Chrysopolis would do better to turn to Mr. Norman Baynes's great essay on that Emperor. But the detailed erudition of Burckhardt's work may still command respect, and its presentation is always challenging.

What, however, really "dates" this book is the manner in which its author allows the sentiments of his own time to colour his picture of the fourth century. Thus Constantine appears as an "essentially non-religious" figure whereas it would in truth be hard to find anyone in that age of any party who could truthfully be so described; and it is fundamentally unhistorical to dismiss as trivialities those things which, both to Eusebius and to those he denounced, were the burning questions of the hour: the measure of the declining pagan world and the formative influences in the medieval future. The age of Constantine cannot be adequately appraised in terms of mid-nineteenth century rationalism. But this notable book may yet serve as a stimulating introduction to the study of both.

DAVID DOUGLAS.

OUR RECENT PAST

THE FATEFUL YEARS: MEMOIRS OF A FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN. By André François-Poncet. *Gollancz*. 18*s*.

M. FRANÇOIS-PONCET'S account of Germany from the Chancellorship of Brüning to Munich is a useful sketch of a period that in retrospect is quite incredible. The most inexplicable part of it is not how a half-crazy fanatic in alliance with a bunch of crooks seized power—that has happened before—but how there could radiate from this corrupt and insane centre a stream-lined efficiency that it took three-quarters of the human race five-and-a-half years to break down. The picture of the German government given here and elsewhere is of the leaders spending hours and hours listening to Hitler's ravings, squabbling among themselves for power and rushing about the country in a way that must have made orderly administration most difficult; yet their most grandiose orders were rapidly and completely executed.

M. François-Poncet did not conceal his distrust of the Nazis, but he was given little opportunity to influence the governments he served. He gives interesting descriptions of the opulent entertainments to which he was invited and of his personal contacts with Hitler, Goering, and the rest. In the main, however, his exclusion from policy-making makes his narrative that of a close observer rather than a participant. His account of Munich is interesting for its defence of M. Daladier and its sympathetic but severe criticism of British diplomacy. Naturally enough it is the violence and instability of Germany of which he was chiefly aware; it was Germany's strength, however, which constituted the danger for Europe and the problem for historians.

R. G. G. PRICE.

A FOUNDER OF CANADA

CHAMPLAIN. By Morris Bishop. *Macdonald & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.* 18s.

TO so many, Champlain is merely a statue in one of Canada's public parks. To so many more, he is merely a name. But Professor Bishop is claiming no more for him than his just due, when he calls him the Father of Canada. The statues show a rather plump and somewhat pompous-looking man; far from impressive in spite of his garb and his fierce moustaches. It is therefore a relief at the very outset to be assured by the author that the likeness is not that of the great traveller, but derives from a spurious portrait.

This must surely rank as one of the best biographies of its kind. In it Champlain lives, in all his rugged and sturdy simplicity. It is fair, and it is exact, and it has real humanity. It pricks a few bubbles, to be sure, but not unkindly. All great figures must always be subject to exaggeration by their contemporaries. Much quainter are the exaggerations of Champlain himself which stem from his curious, but rather lovable, gullibility, prompting him to set down the wildest hearsay as truth. With this gullibility was coupled the need to stimulate the flickering flame of interest in the Canadian venture, which he only just managed to keep alight with his backers in France. His twelve journeys cover a span of more than forty years. In his first he is feeling his way westward, and sees enough of the work of the Spaniards in the West Indies to realize that cruelty has no place in colonization. From then onwards Canada was the whole world to him. He returns home only to report, and recruit what further means he can, to drive the ploughshare a little farther in the West. His lot is cast in two worlds; an ocean apart. He is a visionary with the assets of iron bodily strength, with an inner strength no less great. He has no great intellect, but instead a burning idealism built on a bedrock of common sense. He saw the new Dominion of France as a reality only if the

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trader, the explorer, and the missionary all succeed. To all of them he gives a splendid example; whether of courage in battle, endurance on the Indian trail, or the stoical facing of starvation. To the Hurons and their allies his figure, encumbered with armour and arquebus, that kept pace with them through league after league of swamp and forest, mean France. To their powerful enemies, the Iroquois who traded to the South with the Dutch, it means France and their arch enemy. An essentially moderate and humane man, he treats the cruel and unstable Hurons with a tolerance that he might have extended to badly behaved children. His journeys are punctuated by a return to France and the pleading of his cause before powerful men, who are little interested. Sully's advice to his master, Henry IV, is the pattern, "One never draws riches from anywhere north of the 40th parallel," in fact, the continent from New York northwards. But Henry helps him for the sake of their old companionship of the wars; then the scheming Conte de Soissons, the greedy Condé, and last of all his old master and comrade, the Duc de Montmorency. One by one they are carried off by death or eclipse. But Champlain dies a happy man. For he has lived to see his schemes become part of one of those great symmetrical enterprises of the Duc de Richelieu. In the winter of 1635 the Council in Paris decide to dispense with Champlain's services. But he never receives notice of that dismissal, for his wanderings are over and, amidst the grief of Frenchman and Indian alike, he lay dead in the little fort on the banks of the St. Lawrence. This biography embraces far wider interest than the history of two countries. It is written with human understanding equal to its subject, who will forever be an example of the overmastering power of the determined human spirit.

TWEEDSMUIR.

COVENTRY PATMORE

THE POEMS OF COVENTRY PATMORE. Edited, with an introduction, by Frederick Page. *Oxford University Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

THIS addition to the "Oxford Standard Authors" series, coming as it does close on the heels of Mr. Derek Patmore's recent biography of his grandfather, is timely. It signalizes, one may hope, an awakening interest in a poet who has scarcely, perhaps, received full critical justice. The Victorians are in fashion to-day; and Patmore, the singer of conjugal love, and the observer of a Trollopian society of gentleman farmers and of the Cathedral close, was in some ways a Victorian of the Victorians. But in others his poetry has qualities which set him apart from, and, at its best, above his contemporaries. He has too often been passed over as a mere oddity, even dismissed as a "splendid failure". But, if we look at him in a wider context, his very eccentricity to his own age will be seen to relate him more closely to a broader tradition of poetry. His verse lacks the finely-wrought beauty of Browning's or Tennysons. Nevertheless, we cannot but feel that these writers are, as he is not, fundamentally provincial, in time and space. In spite of their preoccupation with the problems of their day, the gap which existed between their intellect and their senses and passions, renders their verse lacking in true metaphysical seriousness. In Patmore, on the other hand, feeling and intellect, sense and reason, are fused in a manner which recalls the seventeenth century poets, so that he transcends the limitations of the typical nineteenth century conception of poetry. Mr. Page, in his excellently balanced, brief introduction calls Patmore "a son of Wordsworth, a cousin of Merrick, and (in his wit and satire) a half-brother of Pope". The comparisons are apt, and indicate sufficiently the catholic quality of Patmore's affiliations. But other names in English poetry might also suggest themselves. In his intellectual passion he sometimes recalls Donne, and in his

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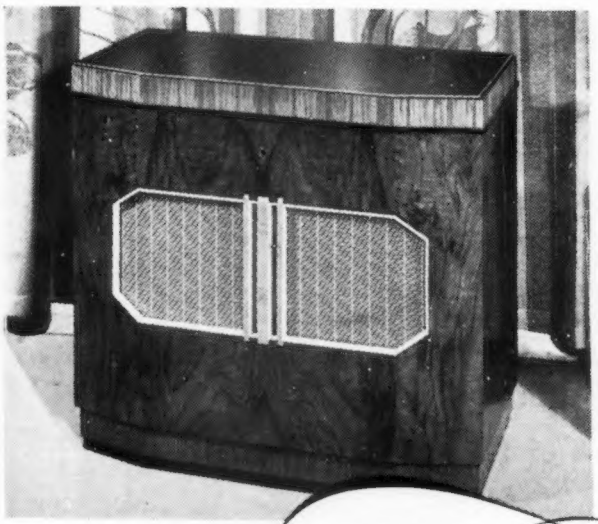

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ecstatic mysticism, Crashaw. The splendid rhetoric of the *Odes* is Miltonic, and the suggestion of an unfallen, paradisial sensuality which we find in some of them, belongs also to the Eden of *Paradise Lost*. At the opposite pole, the poetic realism of *The Angel in the House* is successful in a manner for which Crabbe furnishes almost the only parallel.

In an age of doubt and of changing standards, Patmore stood for traditional values, and attained to a genuine and deep-rooted religious faith. His essential Catholicism of spirit runs through all his poetry, and is apparent long before his actual conversion to the Church of Rome. It is this which enables him to treat the apparently commonplace subject-matter of *The Angel in the House* without self-consciousness. The sense that spiritual realities must necessarily reveal themselves, sacramentally, in the material particulars of mundane existence gives to even such a trivial incident as that of man's selecting a pair of sand-shoes for his betrothed, its due and proper significance. (I deliberately select a passage which has elicited the derisive hoots of stuffed-owl collectors.)

Couched in unpretentious metrical forms, *The Angel in the House*, is capable nevertheless of rising to metaphysical heights when its design requires them. The Odes of *The Unknown Eros*, with their daring prosodical experimentalism, aim higher, and justify their own aspiration. Patmore was conscious that he was not only following, but developing, the great tradition of Christian-romantic Platonism. It is the high tradition of Dante, Petrarch andWordsworth (whose *Prelude* was also "spousal verse"). Patmore regarded it as his poetic mission to give romanticism its crowning significance within the context of the Christian conception of marriage as a Sacrament—type of the Spiritual union of Christ with his bride, the Divine Eros with the human Psyche. These are high matters for poetry, and in *The Unknown Eros* Patmore approaches that dangerous "telling of secrets" with which Hopkins is said to have reproached him. The characteristic Victorian conception of marriage, which formed the starting point of his experience, we can now see as something passing and artificial, based on the particular economic and social conditions of the time. But Patmore was a major poet who transcended these particulars to add to the expression of a tradition which still profoundly influences us, and which may possess further capacities for development and renewal, which we do not, as yet, suspect.

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS.

WHYMPER IN THE ANDES

TRAVELS AMONGST THE GREAT ANDES. By Edward Whymper. Edited with an introduction by F. S. Smythe. *The Chiltern Library*. 8*s*. 6*d*.

THE late F. S. Smythe contributes a preface to this new edition of the record of pioneer ascents in the Andes. I was interested in the contrast between his attempt in his life of Whymper to defend Whymper's indefensible attack on the Taugwalders, his guides on the first ascent of the Matterhorn, and his severe criticism in this preface. To this change of view an article of mine in the *Alpine Journal* must have contributed.

Whymper was a magnificent mountaineer but an unattractive character and I was interested to discover confirmation of what I had learned from other sources in South America, that he left behind him in Ecuador a name which is very definitely not one to conjure with.

This book deserved to be reprinted for it is an accepted classic of exploration in the Andes. Whymper had the makings of a distinguished scientist. He was a pioneer in his researches into the habits of aneroids at high altitudes.

I think it was Tertullian who said, "If you wish to be loved, love". Whymper had no ambition to be loved, and he disliked most people he met in South America with the results mentioned above.

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Still, his caustic comments on the people he met on his travels are entertaining, as for instance his encounter with the Bank of Quito.

"The Bank Manager deducted about Four Pounds for what he was pleased to term his 'advances'. I was unable to regard as 'advances'—monies which were paid on account of a sum which had been deposited several months before, though he assured me it was their 'usual custom'. Said I, 'your custom is novel and interesting, and it shall be mentioned in a book that I intend to write as a thing that ought to be known' ".

This remark had the desired effect. Whymper adds that the Bank had the privilege of re-issuing their notes until they are worn out "and refuse payment of them when certain marks and numbers disappear". Though this manner of earning a dividend is simple and certain in results, and seems to be accepted with perfect resignation, it is possible that it is one of the causes which produce the universal distrust of each and of everybody that is exhibited throughout the country.

ARNOLD LUNN.

THEATRICAL HOPES

THE ACTOR AND HIS AUDIENCE. By W. A. Darlington. Illustrated. *Phoenix House.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

THE theatre, even up to the beginning of the 1914 war, had about it a magical glamour, now almost or entirely vanished. Audiences would cause riots if displeased or "rise" to a *tour de force* of acting, spectators would scream, faint or collapse with laughter and even fellow artists could be rendered speechless. Where has this magic gone, was it of value and if so can it be regained?

Mr. Darlington writes with great clarity of both style and narration; also, and especially on things theatrical, with affectionate authority. He laments the lost magic and from the lives of six great actors and the audience reactions they enjoyed, he entertains biographically while constructing a fascinating thesis. Perhaps his hope that the theatre is now in convalescence and that potentially great actors will get the audiences before whom thay can be truly great, is more than a pious hope. I trust so, but fear that the "transports and raptures" of audiences are no longer possible with our par-boiled mass education, bogus cinema-infected sophistication, Freudian-ridden repressions. If child-like simplicity is a passport to heaven it is no less essential before the "gods" can be transported.

This book deserves and will no doubt secure the careful and happy attention of all interested or working in the theatre; I expect it to maintain a prominent place on their shelves. It may even help towards Mr. Darlington's prophetic hopes, whereupon I shall be first in joining with him in ecstatic jubilation.

JOHN V. TREVOR.

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The New English Review Ltd., 15, Bedford Street, London, W.C.2. Telephone: Temple Bar 8514.
Printed by The Thanet Press, Union Crescent, Margate, Kent.